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58th year of publication

Episcopal Church struggles to maintain unity after electing gay bishop

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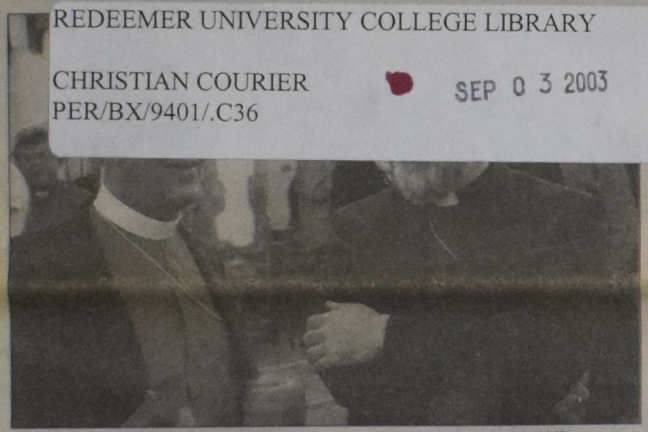


Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold confers with Archbishop Rowan Williams

Angela Reitsma

The General Convention of the Episcopal Church of the USA attracted controversy even before it began, due to its agenda. During the first week in August, the House of Bishops voted on two sensitive issues: whether or not to ratify the election of an openly gay priest, Gene Robinson, and if the church should approve the creation of a liturgy for same-sex unions.

Anglicans from around the world realized the implications that a pro-gay vote would have, and some of them warned Americans in a letter how dangerous the consequences could be. Despite this, and the efforts of conservative Episcopalians in the US, Gene Robinson was confirmed as Bishop on August the fifth. The motion to create a service for homosexual marriage was not passed; however, this compromise did not appease opponents of Robinson's candidacy, who felt that his election will have a larger impact than the liturgy would have, especially on the unity of the Anglican community.

Fault lines

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, is the spiritual leader of the 70 million Anglicans worldwide. He does not, however, have any legal authority over the autonomous provinces, such as the US Episcopal church. When Canon Jeffrey John, also an overt homosexual, was elected to Bishop by his diocese, Williams' role in the province of Canterbury allowed him to deal with the ensuing controversy. The result was that John withdrew, citing "the unity of the church" as more important than his position.

But there was little chance of that happening in the United States, where the Episcopal Church has not rejected a diocese's choice of Bishop for 125 years. The vote at the General Convention was 62 - 43 in favor of ratifying Robinson as Bishop-elect. Immediately after the results were announced, 12 conservative Bishops denounced the decision as a rejection of church teaching, and warned that it would split the denomination in two. Until now, the Episcopal Church has unofficially allowed gay clergy and in some dioceses same-sex unions are blessed. The unequivocal, public decision of the General Convention is threatening to crack open the long-existing fault lines over homosexual practises in the Anglican church.

Gene Robinson, 56, has two daughters from a marriage that ended when he realized his gay orientation. He has been living with a partner, Mark Andrews, for 14 years. Of this relationship, Robinson says that he experiences "a little bit of the kind of never-ending love that God has for me. So it's sacramental for me." Supporters of Robinson lobbied for weeks before the convention, and they state that they are thrilled by his election, though saddened by talk of a split within the church. Robinson is already scheduled to be a keynote speaker at an October conference of Britain's Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement.

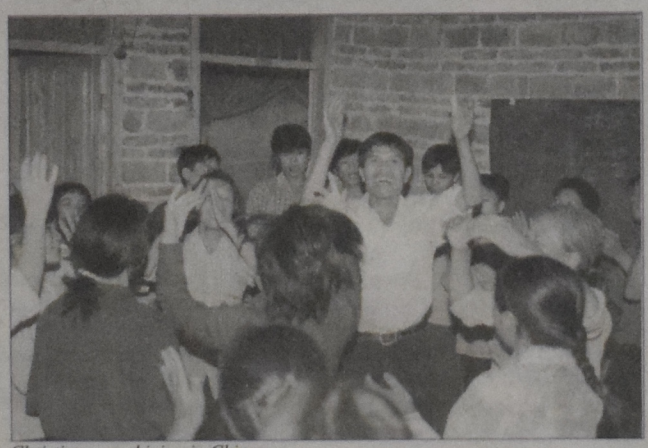
Opponents to Robinson's election believe that "the Episcopal Church has departed from the historical Christian faith," as the American Anglican Council reported. Many African leaders are also currently vocalizing their criticism of the US decision. The

see Gay bishop p. 3

China's paradox: open palm, clenched fist

Elizabeth Kendal

AUSTRALIA (WEA) — China's paradox is that increased openness goes hand in hand with increased oppression – the open palm with the clenched fist. China's paradox is rooted in the tension that exists between democratic reform and the maintenance of ultimate power. In terms of religious liberty for the region (Communist Asia, which accounts for more than one fifth of the world's population) and global mission, China is surely a most strategic nation, worthy of our most vigilant attention and prayers. This is ultimately a case of intense spiritual struggle.



Christians worshiping in China

In this survey we will look at the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) moves towards internal party democracy and China's recent, albeit token, recognition of its ancient Catholic heritage. We will then look at the critical situation facing imprisoned founder and leader of the South China Church, Pastor Gong Shengliang; the latest house church raids as reported by the China Aid Foundation; and the new report by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).

Internal party democracy

On August 6, the South China Morning Post (SCMP) reported that since the new leadership under President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao took the helm in March, many academics are openly writing and publishing proposals on democracy and decentralizing power.

The Morning Post reports that Mr. Sun Zaifu, a high-ranking cadre, has openly urged the CCP to pursue democratic reform, embrace market forces, and curb endemic corruption. Mr. Sun, who is the deputy party secretary for Hunan province and a member of

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News

China's paradox

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the CCP's central disciplinary committee, has identified rampant abuses by provincial cadres as a most serious issue and vowed to bring it to an end.

Stratfor Global Intelligence Report comments on two editorials that appeared in *The People's Daily* on July 17. According to Stratfor, The People's Daily "usually represents the unified voice of the CCP", and therefore, the two strongly pro-reform editorials are most likely to be signaling that reforms are on the way. Stratfor reports that the editorials speak of "party democracy." This is exactly what Mr. Sun Zaifu is talking about in his calls for expanding democracy "step by step," starting from inside the CCP.

Catholic heritage

According to the Morning Post, for a few days in late July/ early August, the Chinese government did, for the first time since 1949, "put on display some of the treasures of the Jesuit legacy to Shanghai. Shanghai's Catholic heritage, says the Morning Post, dates back to "Matteo Ricci, an Italian Jesuit who came to China in the late 16th century and was allowed to live in Beijing in 1601 on an imperial stipend as a western scholar. He and other Jesuits used their knowledge of astronomy, cartography, clockwork and memory training to attract members of the Chinese elite."

"The treasures are on display at the Zangshulou, part of the Shanghai Library in Xujiahui, one of the city's busiest commercial districts. The building is part of a four-storey apartment building in a large complex of churches, schools, orphanages, seminaries and a planetarium built by the Jesuits on land they acquired in 1847."

The article lists some of the ancient books and manuscripts on display – manuscripts in Chinese by Jesuit scholars, a Latin-Chinese dictionary published in 1723, a Portuguese-Chinese dictionary published in 1833 in Macau, books dating back to the 16th century and graphics of Ricci's most famous convert, a senior official in the Ming government who is buried in a mausoleum nearby.

"On the wall hangs a handwritten map of Jiangsu province, produced by a French Jesuit named Gibert, which records the number and location of Catholic churches. Also on display are photographs dating from the 1850s, which record the growth of the Jesuit domain from a single church in a house in traditional style to dozens of western-style buildings, including St Ignatius Cathedral, built between 1896 and 1910 with a capacity of 2,500. It remains the largest Catholic church in China." (SCMP "Treasures of city's Jesuit legacy are put on display", by Mark O'Neill in Shanghai Sunday, July 27, 2003)

A Catholic Church in China

The paradox: converting a religious prisoner of conscience into a criminal

Pastor Gong Shengliang (51) is the founder-leader of the South China Church (SCC), an evangelical house church move-ment with some 50,000 members across 10 provinces. He was arrested and sentenced to death in December 2001 under China's anti-cult legislation for "using an evil cult to undermine the law." There are presently 63 SCC members in prison for worshiping in unregistered house churches. Members say approximately 500 others are "on the run."

The religious nature of the charge against Gong, combined with the death sentence, aroused international condemnation. Female SCC prisoners were tortured into signing testimonies that Gong had raped them. They later withdrew their testimonies saying they were given under duress, and were subsequently sent to labor camps. Pastor Gong was retried in the Jingmen Intermediate People's Court on October 10, 2002. The "testimonies" were admissible in court, enabling the religious charge and death sentence to be overturned and replaced with a criminal charge of rape and a sentence of life imprisonment.

Intense suffering

Pastor Gong has been severely tortured during interrogations, regularly brutally beaten, deprived of his Bible and forced to undergo intensive brain-washing. He was recently reported as being close to death after being so severely beaten by prison police that he had spent several days in a coma, and was subsequently bedridden and showing signs of internal bleeding and hearing loss. According to sources, Gong is extremely thin and frail, his eyebrow, beard and hair have turned all hoary and grey and his complexion is blue.

Mr. Bob Fu, President of China Aid Foundation, reports that pastor Gong's daughters, Gong Xiaoyan and Gong Huali, remain dedicated full time evangelists. Pastor Gong's wife however, Hu Guifang, is reportedly seriously mentally ill due to the trauma of fear, intimidation, suffering and grief.

By mid-July Mr. Fu was able to report that Pastor Gong was still alive and had been permitted a visit from two relatives. Pastor Gong was separated from his visitors by glass and was supervised the whole time. Pastor Gong did not speak one single word, but it is not known if this was out of protest, or in response to an order not to speak, or because of injuries that had left him physically unable to speak.

In an effort to stop leaks to the outside world, the Chinese authorities recently moved Pastor Gong from Jingzhou prison to Hong Shan Prison, Wu Chang District, Wuhan City, Hubei Province where he is being kept in isolation.

Register or suffer

A national campaign to get house churches to register (and thereby come under government CCP control and supervision) is in operation. The following details are from China Aid Foundation.

On June 28, eighty believers were arrested when police raided a funeral in Hunan province. On July 7, the Re-education Commission of Shaoyang People's Government sentenced six of the house church leaders to between one and a half and two years re-education through labor. Among them are sister Yin Lirong (40) who served two years in labor camp in 1998-99, and brother Ning Shuncheng (50) who served 18 months in labor camp in 1998-99. Both of them were accused of "organizing evil cultic activities with All-Sphere Church (Peter Xu's group)."

Six church leaders from Xiaoshan district, Hangzhou city, Zhejiang province were arrested in a raid on a house church prayer meeting at 4 am, Sunday July 13 and taken to the Lan Tian Hotel, where they have been detained ever since.

Three house church leaders from Bazhong County, Sichuan province were also recently sentenced to re-education through labor.

On July 14 and 22 the Public Security Bureau of Jingmen City, Hubei province detained five believers who are all being held at Shayang Detention Center, Hubei province.

Will religion flourish?

On July 24, Felice D. Gaer, the Vice-Chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) gave testimony before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, posing the question, "Will Religion Flourish Under China's New Leadership?"

Ms. Gaer makes reference to the China paradox. "If the past is any guide, we can expect the party (of Hu Jintao) to pursue a policy of gradual economic liberalization coupled with severe restrictions on political dissent and religious freedom."

Ms. Gaer testifies, "Today, Chinese government officials continue to claim the right to control, monitor, and restrain religious practice, purportedly to protect public safety, order, health, and so forth. However, the government's actions to restrict religious belief and practice go far beyond what is necessary to legitimately protect those interests; in other words, far beyond what is permissible under international law. While China's Constitution provides its citizens with the 'freedom of religious belief,' it does not protect the right to manifest religious beliefs...."

"The crackdowns against religious believers are believed to be sanctioned at the highest levels of government. Indeed, Chinese laws, policies, and practices severely restrict religious activities, including contact with foreign religious organizations, the training and appointment of spiritual leaders, and religious education for children in accordance with the convictions of their parents. As a result of government policies and practices, persons continue to be confined, tortured, imprisoned, and subject to other forms of ill treatment on account of their religion or belief."

Representatives of the USCIRF were to visit China in early August (as mentioned in Ms Gaer's testimony). However, the visit has been postponed due to "unacceptable last-minute conditions imposed upon the Commission's visit by the Chinese government." These include the Chinese government's non-provision of an itinerary of confirmed meetings, and its "insistence" that Hong Kong be dropped completely from the agenda.

Elizabeth Kendal is a writer and researcher for the World Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission

Politics

Gay bishop

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Anglican Archbishop of Kenya described the election as "contrary to Scripture," and the Rev. Peter Karanja of Nairobi stated that he is "totally opposed to the election of the gay priest in the USA." The Anglican Church in Nigeria, second in size only to the Church of England, believes the Episcopal Church "exists primarily in allegiance to unbiblical departures and the waywardness of our generation."

Rowan Williams appealed to global leaders of the Anglican Church to resist drastic and hasty reactions. He also voiced his fear that difficult times await the church as it grapples with the ramifications of the General Convention's decision.

Obsessed with sexual issues

Not every Anglican aligns themself as for or against Robinson's election: there are those who felt disgusted that the issue took centre stage and continues to be a matter of such public contention. The Archbishop of South Africa, Wiston Ndungane, said that "Anglicans are obsessed with sexuality. There are many important issues in the world, issues about life and death. I sometimes feel that [the homosexual] agenda seeks to distract us."

Other topics at the convention included the role of ordained women, some of whom are still searching for recognition after 27 years in office, and the future of the graying church. Several frustrated young people spoke about how their own churches encourage testimonials from youth, but not thoughtful, doctrinal discussion. Others believed that the controversy over homosexuality superceded more important issues, like AIDS relief in Africa, the tension between Christians and Muslims, and global justice.

The Liberian Archbishop, who cannot enter his own country because of war, spoke to the convention about how thousands of Liberians are dying from cholera and diarrhea, desperately in need of doctors. He called for the Episcopal Church to help with food and aid in Africa. The Rev. Sabina Alkire said that, "if Christians lived out their faith fully, there would not be so much poverty today." Many people called for a renewing of the church's vision and did not emphasize their position on homosexuality.

Nevertheless, the decision made by the General Convention remains a significant one. The debate within the Episcopal Church is emblematic of problems that Christians worldwide are encountering, which is why so many church bodies are carefully following the developments around Gene Robinson. Governments, too, are struggling with the legality of homosexual unions. In the last few weeks of July, President Bush stated that he believes marriage to be solely between a man and a woman, around the same time that the Vatican reiterated it did not support same-sex unions.

To date, homosexual marriage is only recognized in the Netherlands, Belgium, Ontario and B.C. What is threatening to split the Anglican community also divides families, churches, and countries. The Rev. Mouneer Abis, Anglican Bishop of Egypt, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa, was succinct in his summary of the crisis: "...whether we can remain together if we hold not merely diverse but contradictory views of the Scripture and what it teaches."

Canadian history exemplifies the tension that results from creating unity out of diversity. The future of the Episcopal church, and every Christian community, depends upon how they weather their own tensions, as seen here with the homosexual question.

See related story p. 8

The UN, NATO and international order

Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

Four months ago in this space I wrote of the influence of the Project for the New American Century within the Bush administration. Members of this group have largely given up on the United Nations and believe that the time is right for the United States to assert its considerable power – unilaterally, if necessary – to achieve some degree of international order. Although I believe this strategy cannot be sustained over the long term, it must nevertheless be admitted that it is occasioned by the genuine incapacities of the United Nations.

Founded in 1945, the United Nations Organization represented a second attempt at international governance in the wake of the League of Nations' failure six years earlier. It was hoped that the UN would provide a measure of collective security for its members, thereby lessening the prospect of general warfare. For a variety of reasons this failed to work properly.

First, there was a tension between the UN Charter, with its guarantee of state sovereignty and noninterference, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which held out norms for the treatment of citizens within these states. Second, the UN Security Council, whose permanent members included the US, Britain, France, the Soviet Union and China, quickly became anachronistic as the political importance of Britain and France declined while Germany and Japan gained in especially economic influence.

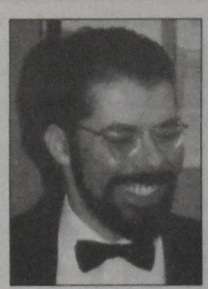
More seriously, the fact that the Soviet Union and later China were dominated by Marxist-Leninist ideology meant that the UN could not act in concert in a number of areas of potential conflict, especially if the actions of a communist state were at issue. The subsequent independence of the large number of former European colonial territories more than doubled the size of the UN's membership, bringing nonwestern cultures into the world body, further complicating its ability to function as a single responsible agent. Finally the presence in the UN of rogue states sponsoring, or at least tolerating, terrorism leaves it virtually immobilized in the face of international aggression.

By contrast, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been one of the most successful international organizations ever. Established in 1949 to contain communism, it has now outlasted its former opponent by more than a decade. Yet far from outliving its usefulness, central and east European countries are clamoring to be admitted into the alliance. Why?

For more than half a century NATO has successfully created a secure space free from the scourge of warfare. It is now functioning primarily to keep its members from fighting each other, much as it has prevented Greece and Turkey, which joined in 1952, from going to war on at least three occasions.

The problem with NATO, however, is that its zone of peace has been established primarily by American military dominance. Both during and after the cold war, its non-American members, including Canada, have been largely content to live under the American security umbrella. Although this has led to a certain order and absence of conflict, it is an unbalanced order badly in need of being rectified.

Over the long term it is in no one's interest, including that of the US, that NATO be so heavily dependent on American power. Americans will not tolerate their young people dying on distant battlefields to protect Slovenians and Estonians. Canadians and Europeans will not wish to subordinate their own legitimate interests to those of the US. Ultimately the rest of us will have to build up our own defensive capabilities to make NATO's zone of peace a balanced one in which military burdens are more equitably shared.



David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, and is the author of Political Visions and Illusions *(InterVarsity Press).*

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Editorials

And God said, "Let there be politics!"

Harry der Nederlanden

As politicians in the US as well as in Canada weighed in on the issue of whether to redefine marriage to allow for same-sex unions, the Vatican exhorted Catholic politicians to act in accordance with their faith and uphold the traditional definition of marriage. Doing otherwise, it declared, is "gravely immoral."

Predictably, this immediately drew charges from the left that the church was mingling in affairs where it did not belong. "Separation of church and state!" they shouted. The same critics, however, seldom cry foul when the World Council of Churches pronounces on the evils of globalization and calls for the cancellation of third world debt.

But I don't want to focus on human inconsistency. Those on the right aren't always consistent either: many evangelicals who now praise the Pope for his boldness were leery of Kennedy because they feared he'd take direction from the Vatican. Nor do I want to discuss the pros and cons of same-sex unions, civil or otherwise. I've had my say on the matter and there's more food for thought elsewhere in this issue.

Religious imperialism

I want to focus instead on the relationship between religious beliefs and political policy.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien and crown prince Paul Martin were both quick to assure voters that, although they are good Catholics, their religious beliefs will not dictate their politics. Martin said that in the political realm public duty must override personal faith. Another Liberal MP said, "I am an MP and not a priest." And several others repeated the separation-of-church-and-state creed.

Some newspaper websites allow readers to post their reactions to issues, and never before have I seen so many letters from readers on a single issue both pro and con. Many in both the US and Canada express a strong aversion to the language of religion in the public sphere, as we saw with Stockwell Day. They were especially incensed this time because the statement from the Vatican was specifically directed to politicians; they saw it as an attempt to force religious beliefs and practices on others.

Governments do, of course, do just that – they pass legislation in the belief that certain forms of behavior are to be demanded because they are for the common good. This is a struggle for power, the power to shape the public life of this society and culture for the good of all.

Many of those who are outraged by the Vatican's call to arms don't see it as seeking the common good; they see it as an attempt to impose sectarian or personal beliefs on those who do not share those beliefs. Moreover, invoking a religious basis for certain public policies such as the preservation of marriage is dirty pool. It is not engaging in public debate; it is cutting off debate. It is, in effect, to say to the opposition: 'This is the right thing to do because God says so.'

This would be a telling critique – if it were true. But I scanned numerous articles written by Christians in defense of traditional marriage, and none of them made their case on that basis. None of them appealed to revelation. All argued from historical, social, cultural and psychological grounds: marriage has always and everywhere been heterosexual; it creates the sphere of the family, which is the basic building block of society and good for children; and it accords with the nature of the human person, serving to cultivate maturity, etc.

Many Catholic defenders appeal to natural law. Natural law refers to those permanent traits and norms that do not require the light of divine revelation but that are accessible to everyone through the (communal) exercise of reason. There is very little specifically "religious" language in these defenses of traditional marriage.

Going incognito

I won't pronounce on whether this is good or bad here. I will say that this is a problem. In order to take part in the public square, Christians are putting aside their appeals to faith and to Jesus Christ to speak a common language. Are they thereby going incognito? Are they in some sense muffling their witness? Is the ultimate aim of Christian political action to exercise power to shape public behavior regardless of belief or is it to witness in order to mobilize people on the basis of free agreement? Or is this a false either/or?

Today evangelical churches which used to be leary about getting involved in politics are becoming hotbeds of political activity. In this they are becoming more like the mainline churches, the core members of the World Council of Churches, which have long been in the habit of issuing directives to politicians and world leaders. They differ only in that they are taking the conservative line instead of the liberal or progressive line.

At the Western Hemisphere Consultation on Theology held in early August, evangelical media guru Ted Baehr urged theologians and pastors from North America and 15 Latin countries to speak out boldly on controversial public issues. In the series of essays "Why go to church?" printed recently in CC, A.A. van Ruler says that the preaching of the gospel and the liturgy has designs on the totality of life; it is political through and through. Our God is not just a God of interiority; he calls all peoples and nations to obedience, including princes and presidents.

Religion is dangerous

So aren't the critics right? Isn't this a form of religious imperialism? Isn't religion with its totalizing demands dangerous when it enters into the public square?

Yes, we must acknowledge that religion is dangerous. It has been so from the beginning of time. Especially when it is not even recognized as religion. In a recent *National Post*, Ted Byfield, former editor of Alberta Report, points out that the aversion to the language of faith in the public square and the insistence that it should be kept private arises not from the voice of common reason but from another religion – secularism – which is becoming our state religion.

We are being nudged more and more into an outright "culture war," an all-out, bare-knuckle fight for the shape of public policy between competing religions.

Before we take that warlike stance, however, we must remind ourselves that it has been the biblical faith that has been instrumental in secularizing politics. In the long view, virtually all peoples once believed that power and authority were sacred things and that those who exercised them were in touch with the divine and authorized to order the affairs of the people according to divine law. People obeyed their sovereign not first of all because they feared punishment from him but because they feared punishment from the gods.

To make a very long story short, the biblical faith undermined this hierarchical, pyramid-shaped view of society in which people participate in divine order by being subservient to the sovereign. The Christian faith introduced *politics*, for it gave a voice to every believer. It thereby also gradually created the public square as a space in which everyone can be heard.

The God of Scripture deliberately involves us in the process of giving shape to our life together. From some believers you get the impression that the only faithful option for the Christian in the public square is to repeat the Bible's (or the Church's) pronouncement on an issue and to hold to that position without compromise.

Politics and compromise

However, politics always involves compromise. Compromise is nothing more than listening to positions that differ from mine and then adapting my position and even my beliefs so that we can work together. In this sense, there is no church, no body of any kind, without politics and compromise. Without compromise there would be as many churches as there are opinionated individuals.

To compromise is not to do away with principle; we adjust to one another on the basis of principle. We do not bully and manipulate others to conform to what we believe to be God's will because we know that God does not just want outward conformity but the response of a willing heart.

There are many things that Christians know to be right and good that they would, nevertheless, not think of seeking to make into public law. At one time you could be fined in England if you were caught wandering about on Sunday during church time. Most Christians believe going to church (or at least to their church) would be good for everyone and for the public weal; yet, none of us want a law to compel church attendance.

There are aspects of Christian behavior that are personal or limited to the church, and the boundary between the public and the personal has not always been drawn in the same place. Here too politics and history plays a role; it is not written in stone.

God prefers to write, not on stone, but on the tablets of the human heart. And the human heart is also what we should continue to aim at.

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Letters

Evangelical Zionists vs. George Bush

Tony Campolo

The good news lately is that George Bush seems to have gotten things on track for peace in the Middle East. The bad news is that pressures from a powerful segment of the Christian community may derail his efforts. Evangelical Zionists, as they are now called, have organized a massive movement aimed at blocking certain steps necessary to resolve the crisis.

Through their vast television audience, leaders such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and Gary Bauer have promoted unquestioning, total support for Israel at the expense of calling for justice for the Palestinians. They have convinced millions of Christians that Israel has dealt fairly with the Palestinians, ignoring all evidence to the contrary.

Christian Zionists have ignored the illegal settlements that have been established on land appropriated to the Palestinians as part of the 1994 Oslo Peace Accord. While properly condemning the heartless and evil terrorist acts of Muslim extremists, they have turned a blind eye to the immoral destruction of hundreds of Palestinian villages and the bulldozing of thousands of Palestinian homes. While they properly highlight the victimization of innocent Israeli school children, by Muslim fundamentalists, they fail to give equal attention to the hundreds of Palestinian children who have been gunned down by Israeli soldiers this year. Yes, a lot of those kids threw rocks at trucks and jeeps carrying Israeli soldiers, but to respond to rock throwing with live ammunition is simply unconscionable.

These Evangelical Zionists contend that because God's covenant with Abraham makes Jews God's chosen people, whoever supports Israel will be blessed, and whoever questions Israel will be cursed. Such thinking is one reason America devotes to Israel one third of its foreign aid – enough to enable Israel to have the world's fourth strongest army.

Don't get me wrong. I too believe America should support Israel and that we should ensure the safety and security of its borders. We owe at least that much to a people that has been victimized by centuries of Christian anti-Semitism. Such support, however, does not mean that we should look the other way when Israel itself engages in oppression and injustice.

An important but little known basis for the Christian Zionists' almost unqualified support of Israel is the theology of John Darby, whose unique interpretation of the Bible declared that Jesus could not return to earth to establish God's Kingdom until the state of Israel was re-established and the Jewish Temple on Mt. Zion was rebuilt. These doctrines of the preconditions for the second coming of Christ have gotten wide circulation throughout the Evangelical community over the last 75 years because they are subtly incorporated into the widely used Scofield Reference Bible, used by countless Sunday school teachers across America in preparing their weekly lessons. Of course, nowadays Darby's theology is gaining even wider audience through the *Left Behind* books of Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, which have sold more than 40 million copies.

It's important to recognize that prior to Darby, teachings about the restoration of Israel and the temple as preconditions for the return of Christ simply did not exist in Protestant or Catholic theology. Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Aquinas and Augustine never even hinted at such ideas; yet Evangelical Zionists now deem anyone who disagrees with Darby to be a heretic. Unfortunately Evangelical Zionists are not content to simply teach their version of biblical prophecy; they seem determined to make it happen through their highly effective political action groups.

I believe it is time for the rest of Christendom to stand up to these people and declare that God's infinite love and requirement for justice extends to Jews and Palestinians alike. We must open our eyes to the pain and the excesses on both sides of this conflict and refuse to be drawn into simplistic solutions that fail to hold everyone responsible for peace. If we don't, President Bush's roadmap for peace will soon fade into oblivion, and the blood of continuing violence in the Middle East will be on our hands.

Eyes and signs: letters to the editor

Given the importance of the issue being discussed, (homosexuals in committed relationships being eligible for office) and the space given in previous CCs to editorial comment, I would have expected your staff to have been present at the special meeting of Classis Toronto on June 25th, so they could report first hand rather than quote the *Banner* and the *Grand Rapids Press*!

Furthermore, we are disappointed that none of the denominational press picked up on the fact that 13 days earlier, on June 12, a special meeting of Classis was held at Community Church in Richmond Hill to spend time talking, listening and praying for direction in this very difficult issue which threatens to divide the church. It should be noted that the June 12 meeting was an official Classis meeting to which all delegates from the May meeting and subsequent June 25 meeting were to be in attendance. In addition, all members of the congregations were invited.

Maybe we need to consider that this is a much healthier process in dealing with difficult topics, that we give time to contemplate, hear each other, pray together and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work in our communities.

Jack Vanderkooy
Richmond Hill, Ontario

Reply:

Right on all counts. However, CC simply doesn't have the staff to provide direct coverage. This is especially true if important classis meetings are held at any distance from our home base. We must rely on freelancers and members of the larger community who share their knowledge and insights.

Dear Editor:

I found the article entitled "Church signs" (July 7, 2003) quite fascinating. As I read the article, I found myself considering the Great Commission – something I hope Mr. Greidanus considers "befits the gospel."

I began to wonder how the writer of the article reacts to the Apostle Paul's method of evangelism. Consider Paul's discussion with the men of Athens in the middle of the Areopagus. "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you." (Acts 17:22-23) Paul goes on to describe this "unknown god" by proclaiming the Gospel.

If Paul were engaging in this kind of evangelism today, would he be considered "corny, silly, or near-blasphemous"?

Of particular interest to me was Mr. Greidanus' reaction to the sign: "Warning: Exposure to the Son may prevent burning." As someone who came into a relationship with Jesus Christ because of the fear of hell and who has since discovered the blessings and wonders of that relationship, I can testify to the fact that a healthy appreciation of Jesus' warning about a final judgment is not a bad thing.

If our church signs are the extent of our witness, then I do agree with Mr. Greidanus when he says, "We sell the gospel short when we resort to silly and sappy slogans." The Good News of Jesus Christ is certainly far beyond the words contained on any sign – or found in any sermon, for that matter. The Good News cannot be contained in a lifetime of a relationship with Jesus.

However, I believe the most important aspect of evangelism and the Great Commission is reaching people where they are and introducing them to Jesus. The Good News needs to be seen as relevant if it is to be heard or accepted by the society in which we live. If a saying on a church sign happens to help in this endeavor, then let us praise God for the work of His Spirit in the life of another human being rather than sitting in judgment of those attempting to make the introduction. Instead of trying to limit the power of the Lord by demanding that He work only in certain ways, let us rejoice in "the greatness of God and the work of the Spirit." Let's follow the example of Paul and help people come to know that "unknown god" personally by whatever means are available (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

Barb McGale
Welland, Ontario

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Letters/Opinion

Do not move an ancient boundary

by Bert Witvoet

The editor asked me if I was willing to write something on the latest discussion in newspapers on the redefinition of marriage. I hesitated because I sent in an article a few issues ago in which I responded to an editorial about the proposed ordination of homosexual church members at Toronto First Christian Reformed Church. I don't want to focus that much on the topic of homosexuality in my writing. After all, Romans 1 mentions homosexual behavior as only one of many sinful practices that make God angry. The others are greed, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, gossip, slander, God-hating, insolence, arrogance, boasting, disobedience to parents, senselessness, heartlessness, ruthlessness. So why should I harp on homosexual sins? God hates those sins no more than my gossip or ruthlessness.

Futile thinking

I did agree to the editor's request, however, because my concern at the moment is not the sexual sins committed by people, be they homosexual or heterosexual. My concern has to do with the way our society and some of our churches are changing the lie into the truth and the truth into the lie. In Romans 1:18 and following that theme is picked up as the all-inclusive reason why God is angry. We read that "the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them." In fact, says the Apostle Paul in verses 19-20, God's qualities are clearly seen in creation "so that people are without excuse."

I would not be able to find a better expression of what bothers me about this whole discussion of the rights of gay people to be married. People are riding rough-shod over God's intentions which are clearly revealed in creation. For thousands of years marriage has been defined as a union between a man and a woman. This definition was based on a verdict of creation (or nature, if you will). And so we read that God created humankind male and female and they would leave father and mother and become one flesh. What arrogance to think that we, who live in the 21st century, have become mature and tolerant enough to change the meaning of this centuries-old institution with impunity.

The truth of what constitutes marriage, which is plain to all honest people, is now being suppressed by dishonest people who want us to swallow the illusion that all human relations can be reduced to a question of rights. These rights-obsessed people are not at all concerned about the fabric of society, the loosening of morals and the nature of covenanting relationships which are rooted in creation.

Confusing opinions

So we should be concerned. But we must be careful how we structure our arguments. How do we understand marriage? I couldn't believe my ears when someone in a Christian Reformed Church announced an upcoming marriage and invited the congregation to witness the sacrament of holy matrimony being administered. Hold on! Since when do Calvinists follow the Catholics in saying that marriage is a sacrament and that marriage is holy. To the extent that we consider all of life holy I can agree. But other than that, marriage is no more holy than eating and drinking, which are also based on the laws of creation.

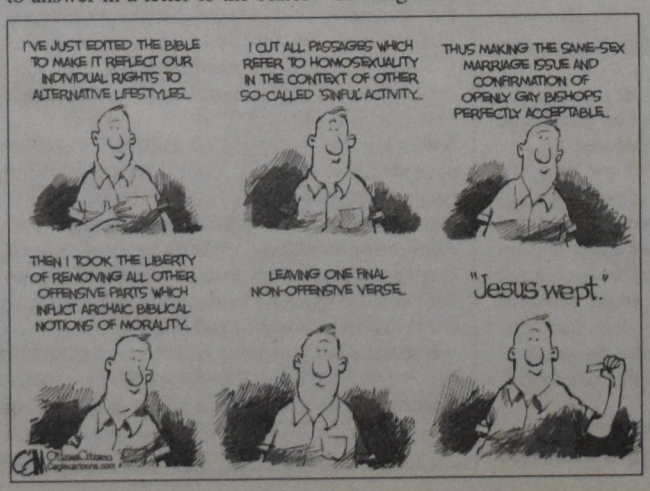
We must also guard against judgmentalism. In a letter to the editor of our local paper, a Christian warned that all homosexual people are like the tares that will be torn up at the end of times. "They are wells that have run dry, they are clouds that do not give water," he wrote. He basically painted homosexual people as the most evil people walking on the face of the earth. I felt compelled to answer in a letter to the editor that, should the writer make it into heaven, by the grace of God, he will be surprised to be welcomed by all kinds of forgiven sinners, including gay people. We don't need this kind of rambling hatred coming from the lips of Christians.

Another confusion that lives in various articles and letters I read is the idea that the church has no business telling the state anything, or the state has no business telling the church anything. That idea of the separation of church and state is a Jeffersonian concept that made it into the American constitution but was never intended to restrict religion as an influence on the state.

Some say marriage belongs to the state; others say marriage belongs to the church. Who is right? Neither one. The state gives legal status to marriage; the church sanctifies it (in Canada the church saves the government money by performing its task of legalizing it). But neither one can claim exclusive jurisdiction over marriage. Marriage is basically a covenant between a man and a woman before the face of God, whether they recognize God or not.

Junk science

I have found a recent discussion in the National Post quite revealing. Professor Michael Bliss wrote a column in which he argued for allowing gays to get married, because, he said, homosexuality is "a genetically driven predisposition, thus a natural and unavoidable human condition." I often like what Michael Bliss has to say. He is a clear thinker and an honest man. But in this he seems hugely misguided. Fortunately, several other clear thinkers responded quickly and with persuasive arguments.


I'VE JUST EDITED THE BIBLE TO MAKE IT REFLECT OUR INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS TO ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLES.
I CUT ALL PASSAGES WHICH REFER TO HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF OTHER SO-CALLED 'SINFUL' ACTIVITY.
THUS MAKING THE SAME-SEX MARRIAGE ISSUE AND CONFIRMATION OF OPENLY GAY BISHOPS PERFECTLY ACCEPTABLE.
THEN I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF REMOVING ALL OTHER OFFENSIVE PARTS WHICH INFLICT ARCHAIC BIBLICAL NOTIONS OF MORALITY.
LEAVING ONE FINAL NON-OFFENSIVE VERSE.
"Jesus wept."

Claire Hoy, a well-known Ontario columnist and panelist and a fearless defender of politically incorrect causes (God bless his rascally Presbyterian soul), took Bliss to task. "Really?" he countered. "Where is the scientific truth for this? And how do we account for the thousands of practising homosexuals who have been counseled into heterosexuality?"

An even more authoritative voice against Bliss's position came from Joseph Berger, president of the Ontario Branch of the American Psychiatric Association. He argued that Bliss's statement was scientifically incorrect. In fact, he called it "junk science." This is what he says: "The many claims that homosexuality is irreversible have been debunked and shown to be purely hysterical political propaganda. Numerous credible studies have testified that large proportions of well-motivated people who had considered themselves to be homosexual have become comfortably heterosexual, some through psychological treatment, others through religious guidance and support."

Junk opinion

Place that kind of responsible statement against the following letter in the same August 6 issue of the National Post and you will see how a political agenda suppresses the truth and perpetuates false myths: B.J. Miller of Ottawa writes that "those of us who are gay or lesbian [are] held in contempt next to those 'reclaimed heteros' who, with the help of prayer and fundamentalist preachers, manage to suppress their sexuality. Every indication we have is that these programs are producing self-loathing and mentally disturbed graduates.... They often form bonds with similar patients (of the opposite sex). Some bring children into this world. Rarely are the families happy. It is ... a much more destructive lifestyle than gay marriage will ever promote."

I cannot find a clearer example of what God is saying to us in Romans 1:18-21, namely that godless men will suppress the truth, even though they know better. "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened." Futile thinking is what we are up against, and this, I find a frightening development.

Not love

Let me conclude this quoting of letters by reprinting part of a letter written by a Rev. Dr. David Kyle Foster. He writes: "It is not love to encourage and institutionalize a behavior that is destroying the lives of so many people. As a former homosexual, I love those who have this struggle, and I refuse to join with those in our culture who pretend that the homosexual lifestyle is just as normal and healthy as everyone else's. There is a profound brokenness among homosexuals that needs to be mended, rather than celebrated. Statistics show that almost 1/3 of young gay men will have HIV or be dead from AIDS before they reach the age of 30. Half will suffer this fate before they are 55. "In spite of being at the forefront of preaching 'safe sex' and 'use a condom' messages, CDC studies have shown that half of all young gay men continue to practice the most dangerous form of sex known for spreading the AIDS virus-. The suicide, substance abuse, domestic violence and other rates of dysfunctional behavior among homosexuals are off the charts compared to the rest of us. This self-destructive lifestyle needs to be healed rather than blessed."Society, it seems, has chosen to dismiss the homosexual by giving in to their demands. To love them is to tell them the truth and to offer them the forgiveness and healing that Jesus Christ provides. As one who has received this grace from God, I plead with you all to love them enough to tell them the truth."

Ancient boundaries

But in the meantime, the push for gay marriages continues. I predict that Christians will end up being persecuted if this trend continues. Already the former mayor of London, Ont., was fined a few years ago because she refused to take part in a Gay Pride parade. I am not addressing the fact that people sin in sexual ways. Many of us do. Who of us will dare cast the first stone? What concerns me is that the truth is being suppressed and that our society will be reshaped in a way that will make the wrong seem right, and the right, wrong. God help a civilization that

see p.7

Review

Summer Movie Rentals

Ron Vandenburg

I know, I know. It's beautiful weather outside. It's summer, time for summer projects, barbeques and long walks and bike rides. Being a teacher, I have a longer summer break then others, giving me opportunities to explore my hobbies. For me, it's also time to catch up with some intentional movie watching.

This review page can be just like meeting fellow Christians at the movies or the video store. While engaging our culture, we look over each other's choices and give quick excuses for the content we have just viewed or plan to see. As with most media, Christians cannot rely on movies to impart the message of the gospel; it is up to them to take what is there and use it as the basis for a personal discussion, whether it be with their friends, their co-workers, or their own family. We are not just trying to find a way for Christians to justify their appreciation for pop culture or to find ways to condemn what is said; the challenge is to keep the discussion going – pushing questions, being pushed back to come to a deeper understanding of our own worldview and that of others.

That being said, I won't claim to be an expert Christian movie buff, but I will tell you what I think about some of the movies I've explored recently.

Life is Beautiful

(1998). Starring: Roberto Benigni, Nicoletta Braschi, Giustino Durano, Sergio Bini Bustric, Marisa Paredes / Directed by Roberto Benigni

Recently I showed this movie to my teenaged students as part of a unit on the Holocaust. I told them that the first part of the movie was a love story between a man and woman while the second part was a love story between a father and son. I also told them that this holocaust film was a comedy.

Roberto Benigni's comic character Guido evokes the images of the old movie comedies of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. From the opening sequence of a runaway car to his comic marching into the concentration camp, Benigni guides us through a comic but touching journey of man who tries to protect his family from terrors of World War II. We follow him as he enchants a local school teacher, using his humor and quick thinking. Later he pretends to his son that the concentration camp is full of games and they are competing in a special contest, and we realize that no matter how bizarre the father's white lies become, nothing is more far-fetched and unbelievable than the horrible truth of ovens and genocide.

*Scene from **Life is Beautiful***

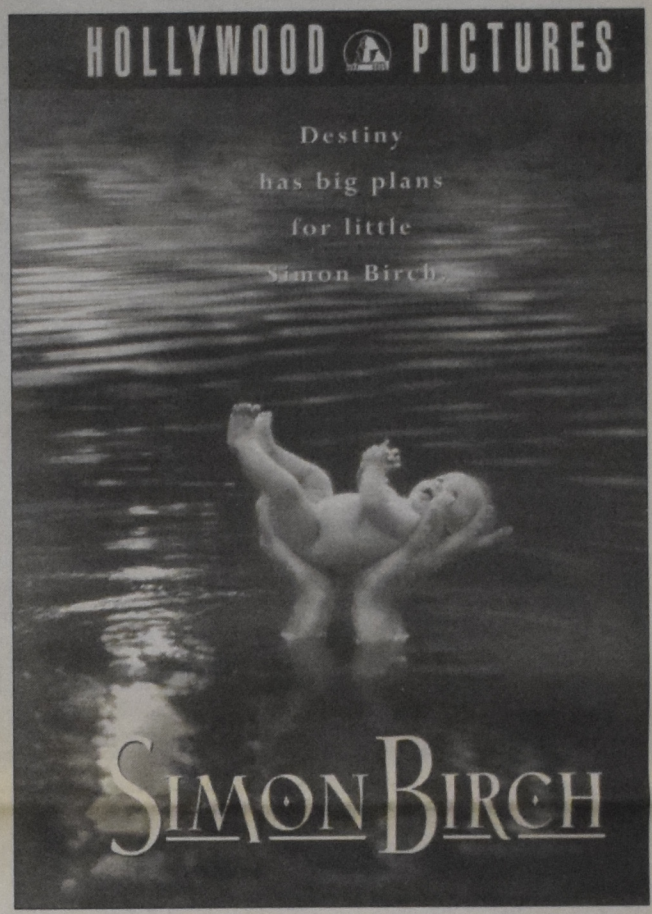
I recommend that you watch this story of hope using the subtitled version to enjoy the tone and music of the speech in this character film.

Simon Birch

(1998). Starring: Ian Michael Smith, Joseph Mazzello, Ashley Judd, Oliver Platt, David Strathairn / Directed by Mark Steven Johnson

Based on John Irving's novel *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, the film *Simon Birch* is a story of two adolescent boys trying to find answers in a world where the adults hold everything to themselves. Simon is a young boy who was born with a disease that stunted his growth, but he sees himself as God's instrument and he is looking for his predestined calling to be fulfilled. With this overpowering faith, he is ridiculed by his peers and ignored by his parents. He challenges the beliefs of both the struggling pastor and his pharisaical Sunday school teacher.

A coming of age story, the film is peppered with adolescent sexual wondering and some profanity, but the heart of the story explores the relationship between Simon and equally outcast friend Joe. As the film progresses, the plot threads intertwine to create a neatly packaged destination, but it is clever writing (not God) that leads the characters to discover that they are indeed part of a plan.



The Count of Monte Cristo

(2002). Starring: James Caviezel, Guy Pearce, Dagmara Dominczyk, Richard Harris, Luis Guzman / Directed by Kevin Reynolds

This action/adventure based on Alexander Dumas's classic story of revenge and justice is full of sword play, intrigue and a man's faith journey. An innocent man, Edmund Dantes (James Caviezel), is sent to the famous Chateau D'If prison located on a barren island. Every year of his imprisonment he is beaten, and daily he traces over the inscription in his cell: "God will give me justice." During his torture, he wallows in his despair and rejects God.

In prison, he meets Abbe Faria (Richard Harris). At one point of despair, Edmund exclaims "I don't believe in God!" and the priest replies, "It doesn't matter; he believes in you." Just as the two are nearing an opportunity to escape, Abbe is injured and gives his trusted friend a map to a large treasure. Edmund finds the treasure and uses the money to reinvent himself, plotting revenge against his betrayers.

The story continues as the hero wavers between his revenge and his mercy. For the viewer it is easy to see the villains through Edmund's eyes, forgetting forgiveness and remembering that judgment is in God's hands. Check off for yourself where the hero achieves justice and where he exacts revenge.

Stalag 17

(1953). William Holden, Don Taylor, Otto Preminger / Directed by Billy Wilder

I picked this one up at my local library, a wonderful place to explore classic film for free. Having been a great fan of *The Great Escape*, I really enjoyed this prisoner-of-war movie that became the basic of the TV cult hit *Hogan's Heroes*. Although the story is full of comedy, it is more about the attempts of men to retain their sanity in a dangerous and dehumanizing situation. The barracks are full of tension, as the prisoners believe that one of their own is trading secrets for privileges in the camp.

Who could it be? The camp cynic, the shell-shocked victim, the clown, the woman-crazed voyeur, or the barracks' hot-head?

The film is as sad as it is funny. With well-defined characters and an intriguing mystery, the film is good analysis of good and evil and the ability of man to exist in the worst of conditions.

The movies take me on some great trips that I otherwise could not afford and on journeys I need to take. They prompt me to explore worldviews and teach me to think, pushing me in all sorts of thought-provoking directions.

Do not move an ancient boundary

...continued from p. 6

no longer provides guideposts for its people. God help a church that follows that trend.

I know Christians who think we are just talking semantics when the topic of the definition of marriage comes up. "Let the world think what it will," they say. "We Christians know what marriage is about. Let's be tolerant. There are more important issues to consider in this world." My response to that is, with that kind of attitude nothing will ever be important enough for us to speak up. It's crucial that we not lose the necessary references to what makes us truly human and truly blessed. "Do not move an ancient boundary," we read in Proverbs 23:10. That prohibition could be applied to the redefinition of marriage. How can we tell what is rightfully ours if we move that ancient boundary? God gives us these boundaries so that we can orient ourselves in a confusing world.

Romans 13 tells us that "rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong." Governments and courts are portrayed as "God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer." This picture is seriously being skewed by current developments in the area of law making and law interpretation in Canada. Instead of being agents of wrath, our rulers, if they pass a law that redefines marriage as the union between two persons, will provoke God's wrath.

That is the up-side down world I do not want for my children and grandchildren.

Church

Sudanese Christians pray in hope that peace talks resume

By Fredrick Nzwili

Nairobi (ENI) — Sudanese church leaders and their followers in exile in Kenya have called on Christians around the world to pray for their "bleeding nation" ahead of peace talks scheduled for August.

"The south of Sudan is flooded with graves. Thousands of people have died, but this does not mean God has forsaken us," Sudanese Anglican priest, the Rev. Paul Benjamina told a gathering in Nairobi on Saturday. "The dead are not bones but martyrs. The time will come when we shall remember them."

The Christians had gathered to pray for peace in Sudan and for the success of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a conflict resolution body that sponsored negotiations and is seeking to forge a peace between the mainly Christian and animist south of the country, and the Muslim-dominated north.

The peace talks resumed August 11 in Nanyuki in central Kenya, against a backdrop of bitter disagreements over a draft peace accord, which the mediators had presented in talks last month.

Last year, the two sides agreed to waive Islamic law in non-Muslim areas and to allow southerners a referendum on secession after a six-year transition, but people from the south fear the Sudanese government is wavering on the plan.

"Do not give in, in spite of all these tribulations. Those who have attained their freedom never gave up," said the Rev. George Wanjau, former moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

According to West Yugulle of the New Sudan Council of Churches, the church has been participating in peace building in Sudan. "However, differences among our people have bogged us down on the road towards liberating ourselves," he said.

The Sudan People's Liberation Army has been fighting since 1983 for independence for the south. International agencies estimate the war has killed 1.5 million people and displaced 4 million, in a country with an estimated 2 million Christians, 9 million people who follow traditional religious beliefs, and 26 million Muslims.

Religious nationalism and elections, Cambodia

Elizabeth Kendal

AUSTRALIA (WEA) — Some 86 per cent of Cambodians are Buddhist and just 1 per cent are Christian. Only around 2,000 of Cambodia's 12,000 Christians survived the 'killing fields' of the late 1970s. In the past decade of peace and freedom the church has grown phenomenally and brought great healing to many suffering Cambodians. The Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia (EFC) estimates that today there are around 130,000 Christians, meeting in approximately 2,000 small churches scattered throughout the country. Many former Khmer Rouge, including some once greatly feared senior Generals, have become Christians and now serve the Lord as missionaries across Cambodia. God is doing amazing works of healing and transformation in people's hearts.

Over the past nine months, Cambodia's various political rivals have been competing for the backing of the influential Buddhist clergy in the run up to the July 2003 elections. Late last year in two villages Buddhist groups protested against the Christian presence in their villages. This was the first time that Cambodia had seen such anti-Christian demonstrations. The group behind the protests labeled Jesus, "Pol Pot Number Two," and urged people to "stand up in solidarity to topple the Pol Pot group" so as "not to betray their own nation and their own religion." The protests were instigated by the opposition party after local Christians expressed support for the ruling Cambodian People's Party. This appalling disinformation is unconscionable Buddhist nationalism for political gain.

Buddhist nationalism has been on the rise in Cambodia in recent years. In November 2002, the Cambodian Independent Teachers' Association (CITA) recommended that all references to God be removed from school textbooks, maintaining that references to God are unconstitutional as Cambodia's constitution states that Buddhism is the state religion. The CITA even said God "is a medicine that is poisoning students and will lead to social unrest." In February 2003 Cambodia's ministry of cults and religious affairs issued a directive to ban all Christian proselytising.

On Sunday July 13 a mob of some 100 Buddhists ransacked the Christian church in Kok Pring during a Sunday mass, destroying the cross at the altar, breaking windows, and throwing Bibles into puddles of water. Several believers were injured. Police prevented the mob from razing the church. The vandals accused the Christians of having contempt for the Buddhist community. The church is in the southeast, near the border with Vietnam, and it is suspected that the Christians were predominantly Vietnamese Montagnards and that both Cambodian Buddhist nationalism and racial issues were contributing factors in the attack.

Archbishop of Canterbury calls special session to head off split

Peter Akinola, Primate of Nigeria, between the Bishop of Jerusalem, Iraj Muttahedeh, and Desmond Tutu

Following the election of an openly gay bishop by the US Episcopalian Church, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, said he would call a crisis meeting of Church leaders.

"I am clear that the anxieties caused by recent developments have reached the point where we will need to sit down and discuss their consequences," said Williams in a statement which named London as the location for the mid-October meeting.

"I hope that in our deliberations we will find that there are ways forward in this situation which can preserve our respect for one another and for the bonds that unite us," said Williams.

Conservative bishops have scheduled their own meeting for the week prior to be held in Texas.

After announcing the results of the vote, Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold permitted Bishop Robert Duncan of Pittsburgh, among the most outspoken opponents of Robinson's appointment, to make a statement rejecting the General Convention's action. Surrounded by 18 bishops, Duncan said, "With grief too deep for words, the bishops who stand before you must reject this action of the 74th General Convention of the Episcopal Church." He added, his voice breaking with emotion: "As faithful Episcopalians and members of this house, we are calling upon the Primates of the Anglican Communion...to intervene in the pastoral emergency that has overtaken us."

Archbishop Peter Akinola, Primate of Nigeria, in a written statement, said: "We applaud the admirable integrity and loyalty of those gallant 45 Bishops of ECUSA who have refused to succumb to the pressure for compromise. In the language of the Bible, they have refused to bow their knees to baal."

He said his communion would have to rethink their relationship to the US church. He went on to warn that "...a Church that enthrones the will of men over and above the authority of God and His revealed and written Word. Such a Church is bound to become a shrine for the worship of men rather than God. We cannot go on limping between two opinions."

Rev. Greg Venables, Primate bishop of the Southern Cone of America, which covers Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay, said that he and other "orthodox primates" had declared the US church to have "stepped out of communion" and would be meeting soon "to take the sad but necessary next steps." He declared that the election of Robinson "not only divides the Christian Church but goes against what God has said."

Rev. Mouneer Anis Bishop of Egypt, North Africa and the Horn of Africa said: "We have a great respect for the church in North America but we cannot comprehend a decision to elect as bishop a man who has forsaken his wife and the vows he made to her in order to live in a sexual relationship with another man outside the bonds of his marriage.

"We feel profoundly let down, as this decision will unquestionably damage our interfaith relations with our Muslim friends among whom we live. It will also have a negative impact on our relations with the Orthodox and Catholic Churches in our area, which continue to hold fast to the apostolic faith and teachings from the first century. We will definitely be seen by them now as heretical."

According to ENI, conservative members of the Episcopalian Church in the US opposed to active homosexuals as clergy will hive off and form a second Anglican grouping in the United States. A number left the Minneapolis convention early in protest.

The American Anglican Council, the major conservative Anglican group in the United States, said it would ask the church leadership to recognize a second US province – in effect, forming two Anglican denominations in the country, one conservative, one liberal. Frank Griswold, the denomination's presiding bishop, however, responded that it was unlikely the worldwide Anglican communion would approve "two parallel realities within one geographic area."

The Canadian diocese of New Westminster, which covers greater Vancouver, declared in May that it would formally bless same-sex unions. In response, 16 primates in Africa, India, South America the West Indies, the Philippines and Southeast Asia severed ecclesiastical relations with the Vancouver diocese and its bishop.

Nine parishes in the Vancouver area also broke with their own diocese, resolving to ally themselves instead with the Yukon diocese, whose bishop is a conservative on the issue.

Church

Hate campaign against Christians heats up in Kerala, India

Dan Wooding

KERALA, INDIA (ANS) — Until recently, the Indian state of Kerala has been, for many years, a safe haven for Christians. The anti-Christian violence which is a regular occurrence in North India and other states had not yet found a place in this state.

The All India Christian Council (AICC) says that there have been powerful secular movements in Kerala state, and the state's Communist Party has always been checking the advance of the saffron wave, but things have been taking a different direction of late. Now a hate campaign against Christians has started in the state.

"The RSS, a fundamental Hindu group, has had phenomenal growth in Kerala," said an AICC spokesperson. "Almost every village in the state has a squadron of militant khaki-clad, sword-wielding RSS volunteers who have been indoctrinated to fight against minorities. The RSS was involved in the destruction of parts of the boundary walls of the Maramon Convention ground in an operation akin to the Babri Masjid destruction. The formation of the Hindu nationalist government has attracted a large number of formerly secular people under the guise of 'Hindu pride.' Many claim there is now a concerted effort to destroy the Church in Kerala."

Rev. T. A. Koshy, General Secretary of the Mar Thoma Evangelical Association in Kerala, said, "The notion that the Church of Kerala is the driving force behind the evangelical activity in India has gained prominence. As a consequence, the idea that the 'Kerala Church must be destroyed' is being secretly propagated. What we see are the organized attempts to destroy the church. It has come to a point that those who wear (priestly) robes are perceived as problematic. The indoctrination now being given even to the children is that Christians, even if they are neighbors, are to be attacked. The religious hatred has increased among the youth."

History disproves Hindu nationalists

"The leader of the Kerala VHP, another militant Hindu group, has said that all Christians and Muslims in Kerala are Hindus who have merely converted to other religions," said the AICC spokesperson. "This statement is an absolute falsehood as Aryan Brahminic Hinduism came to Kerala centuries after Christianity was established there. The Aryan invaders of Kerala effectively destroyed the local tribal, Dravidian and Sudroid religions.

"Even the famous Sabarimala temple was a Buddhist temple. Thus to claim that all people of Kerala are Hindus by origin is fallacy. The Dalits and Tribals have never been a part of Hinduism. Such falsification of history by the Hindu revivalists is merely placing a stamp of antiquity on Hinduism in Kerala in an attempt to convert Christians to Hinduism."

Christians converted to Hinduism

The AICC spokesperson said that five Christian families from a Dalit background have been re-converted to Hinduism by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) in Kerala.

The incident took place in a Dalit colony, said the spokesperson. "Eighteen Christians were converted apparently under allurement of reservation benefits and other coercive tactics by the VHP.

"Ironically, this happened in the wake of a demand from Hindu revivalist outfit, the Kerala Temple Conservation Forum, for legislation that would counter forcible religious conversions in Kerala as seen in other anti-conversion bills passed in Tamil Nadu and Gujarat states."

Clandestine survey of Christians

A clandestine anti-Christian, anti-minority survey has been going on for several months in the state of Kerala. A survey in the Nedunkantom taluq of the Idukki district catalogues the names and personal information of all Christians and other minority groups in the area and has been given to the Central government authorities. The officers conducting this survey claimed to the press that the very same personnel employed for the general census had also been assigned the task of surveying the minorities. Officials also admitted that since these personnel carried out their tasks secretively and without raising any suspicion, the church and Masjid authorities willingly co-operated with them.

Both the Special Branch of the police and the Intelligence Bureau have also been engaged in parts of this clandestine survey.

Meanwhile, another survey of Christians and minority groups began in another Kerala district, Palakkad. The churches and mosques in this community will now come under the watchful eyes of the Indian Central Government's Home Ministry. Questionnaires have been distributed to the officers of the villages in this district and the officers have been directed to "collect and compile data with utmost urgency" and return them "immediately." The village officers are required to personally visit each church or mosque and collect accurate data.

This type of survey could be dangerous to Christians and other minorities. It has been proven that the violence of Gujarat state in 2002 was made easier for the antagonists because a survey of minorities had been done prior to the initial attacks. This is only further proof of the highly coordinated and planned campaign that has been launched on Christians and minorities nationwide.

Recent attacks in Kerala state

According to AICC, the Indian Pentecostal Church's Faith Home and its Pastor's residence were attacked on January 1, 2003. Fifty people who had just attended a New Year's Night prayer meeting were present to witness and fall victim to this atrocity.

Also, the premises of St. Louis Malankara Catholic Church in Kerala state were vandalized by hooligans from the Hindu Unity forum, and RSS-sponsored strike team trespassed into the Church compound to prevent pending construction work. Workers and Church officials who intervened were assaulted.

The AICC says communal violence against minorities has been spreading in Kerala. The attacks are "selective" and "precise" against Muslims – their shops, vehicles and religious structures.

It also revealed that unidentified persons destroyed 23 crosses standing on the tombs in the cemetery of the Burnassery Cathedral in Kannur, Kerala.

Hindu organizations attacked the Brennen College in North Kerala and held its principal captive. The attack came after the Hindu group accused the college of publishing a student magazine that carried offensive articles.

Also a group of unidentified miscreants ransacked the Blessed Alphonsa Church in Kolayad, Kerala smashed the altar and damaged other religiously significant items in the church building.

A Hindu terrorist group attacked a Brethren preacher while he was preaching from the pulpit of a church. He was seriously injured with sharp sword-like weapons and was taken to hospital in critical condition.

Another Brethren preacher, K.N.Thomas was attacked in church in the presence of six people, gathered to hear the preacher's message. At about 8:00 pm, the Hindu terrorists broke open the gates of the building and attacked the preacher with sharp weapons. The injured, as well as the police have confirmed that the RSS was behind the attack.

Campaign against Bible college

The AICC says that Kummanam Rajasekharan, an extremist Hindu communal leader has been appointed as the VHP State coordinator for Kerala.

He has successfully misled many Indians into believing that the madrassas [Christian schools] are terrorist training centers, said the AICC spokesperson. "He has alleged that KP Yohannan's Gospel For Asia Bible School is a training center for Christian militants."

The AICC spokesman has asked for prayer for the Christians of Kerela as the attacks against them continue.

Dan Wooding is the founder and international director of ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in Strategic Times).

Indian Christians want U.S. to do more for religious freedom

NEW DELHI, India (EP) – Given the climate of increasing violence against Christians and other religious minorities and recent laws that infringe their constitutional rights, church leaders in India have expressed regret over the United States government's refusal to designate India a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC), according to a report from Compass Direct.

Last March, officials of the Bush administration published a list of CPCs, citing Myanmar, China, Iran, Iraq, North Korea and Sudan for severe religious freedom violations, but left off several other nations where Christians suffer.

Compass Direct reported Indian leaders are not the only ones of the opinion that conditions in the country warrant a CPC designation. In May, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) reported that it was "deeply disappointed that U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell did not designate India, Pakistan, Laos, Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan and Vietnam" as CPCs.

"Since 1998, there have been hundreds of attacks on Christian leaders, worshipers, and churches throughout India," the report stated. The USCIRF advises the U.S. President, Secretary of State and Congress on matters of global religious freedom.

In September 2002, the USCIRF asked Powell to place India in the category of "egregious religious freedom violators."

According to Compass, the USCIRF said it was "increasingly concerned about abuses of religious freedom in India, including the communal violence and killings that took place in Gujarat last year." The panel expressed particular concern over Christians and other minorities periodically subjected to severe violence, with those responsible rarely held to account.

"The increase in persecution in India is troubling," says Jerry Dykstra, media relations coordinator at Open Doors USA. "Christians are increasingly becoming targets of violent attacks. And the passing of the Anti-conversion Bill by Gujarat state is an ominous sign. There is a possibility that legislation like that could be passed in other states. We need to lift up India in our prayers – that Christians in that country stand firm in the face of persecution."

Open Doors with Brother Andrew is helping Christian pastors, leaders and other believers by conducting "Standing Strong Through the Storm" seminars in India. In the seminars, teachers give students the tools they need to stand against persecution.

An estimated 200 million Christians worldwide suffer persecution for their faith in Christ, with another 200 to 400 million facing discrimination for being Christian.

To partner with Open Doors visit www.opendoorsusa.org.

The Root Cause of anti-Americanism: the homegrown version (part 3)

Harry Antonides

"The intellectual most associated with the view that America is the great Satan is MIT linguistics professor Noam Chomsky.... He is now easily the most influential figure in the radical movement....The heroic dimensions of Chomsky's status derive from his performance of an absolute critical service to the contemporary Left – developing the devil theory that holds America and the West responsible for all the world's evil." (Peter Collier & David Horowitz, *Destructive Generation*, p.228)

If you were listening only to the strident voices of the left of the American intellectual and political landscape, you would think that America is fast becoming a totalitarian country where all dissent is smothered by the juggernaut of the sinister, conspiratorial occupants of the White House. Here are a few samples of a prevailing mindset filled with bitterness and loathing, as reported in David Brooks' *Weekly Standard* column of June 30.

"This republic is at its greatest danger in its history because of this administration," according to Democratic senator Robert Byrd.

"I think this is deliberate, intentional destruction of the United States of America," says liberal commentator Bill Moyers.

Thomas Frank, writing in *Harper's*, has called the Bush budget "a blueprint for sabotage."

Hendrik Hertzberg, in the *New Yorker*: "It's tempting to suggest that the Bush administration is failing to provide Iraq with functioning, efficient, reliable public services because it does not believe in functioning, reliable public services – doesn't believe they should exist, and doesn't believe they can exist."

American Prospect editorial: "The suspicion will not die that the administration turned to Iraq for relief from a sharp decline in its domestic prospects."

Comments Brooks: "In this version of reality, Republicans are deviously effective. They have careful if evil plans for everything they do. And these sorts of charges have become so common we're inured to their horrendousness – that Bush sent thousands of people to their death so he could reap government contracts for Halliburton, that he mobilized hundred of thousands of troops and spent tens of billions of dollars merely to help secure favorable oil deals for Exxon."

This small sample of venom spouted, not by the mad fringes of the malcontents but by the mainline political and media spokespeople, is proof that anti-Americanism is alive and well right on its home turf. There exists a deep current of alienation and contempt among the American elite. In fact, it is right within the major opinion-shaping cultural institutions of America that one encounters some of the most vicious attacks on that country. This applies especially to the major spokespeople within the media, the academy, the Hollywood entertainment industry, and even some churches.

One notable institution where anti-Americanism has not taken root is the United States military – though it did not entirely escape its influence. The reason for that is at once obvious, for if it had been otherwise there would be no effective American military. Just look at what has happened to the military in this country, but that is another story.

Let's be clear about the meaning of anti-Americanism. We are not talking about the free flow of conflicting opinions, the open and vigorous debate of opposing viewpoints. Such is the legacy of an open and free society where all viewpoints can be tested in the public marketplace of ideas and beliefs. This kind of exchange happens in the best of Western democracies where responsible government is coupled with a clear distinction between the state and civil society.

Anti-Americanism as ideology

Anti-Americanism is something quite different because it is an ideology, as explained by James Ceaser in my July 28 article, that "rests on the singular idea that something associated with the United States, something at the core of American life, is deeply wrong and threatening to the rest of the world."

Paul Hollander in his book *Anti-Americanism* uses this term "to denote a particular mindset, an attitude of distaste, aversion, or intense hostility the roots of which may be found in matters unrelated to the actual qualities or attributes of American society or the foreign policies of the United States."

In this light, it should not come as a surprise that public debate in the United States is not about careful yet vigorous testing of ideas. On the contrary, now the stakes are very high and those on the other side of an issue are not just mistaken but evil; they endanger the right order of things and are a threat to society.

This development is obvious in the relationship between the Republicans and Democrats. President Bush for a number of reasons, mostly having to do with his determined leadership in the war against terrorism, is at the receiving end of vicious attacks. These are no normal, reasonable critiques. On the contrary, they do not even stop short of the outrageous charge that President Bush and the "warmongers" in his administration want to destroy the country.

What has happened that has led such blind hatred to thrive in a country to which the stream of refugees from the truly awful, murderous regimes continues to flow? Many are even risking their lives to reach America, which to them is a place of freedom and opportunities, an escape from the horrendous evils they have witnessed first hand. How to explain this anomaly? There are no easy, quick answers, but a closer look at a few of the main denigrators of the United States may provide some clues.

The blame America club

One of the most prolific if not garrulous critics of the United Sates is the darling of the radical left Noam Chomsky, professor of linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is the ever-ready pundit commenting on all things pertaining to the character and role of the United States – and on every other question you care to ask him. He is best-known for his many interviews, speeches and books in which he details the evils of the American "empire" as the epitome of capitalism and oppression. He lectures and is interviewed all over the world and is the recipient of numerous honorary degrees and prestigious awards.

Chomsky's worldview is hard to pin down. He has described himself as an anarchist, yet one who sometimes favors electoral politics. He has advocated a system of workers' control with no "state" or "government" institutions. In his *Reasons for the State* Chomsky argues for a society without paid labor. In a series of interviews after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, he denounced the US as "a leading terrorist state."

In a *New York Times* article of March 13, 2003, Chomsky presents his case against US adventurism in Iraq, as follows:

"The most powerful state in history has proclaimed it intends to control the world by force, the dimension in which it reigns supreme.

"President Bush and his cohorts evidently believe that the means of violence in their hands are so extraordinary that they can dismiss anyone who stands in their way.

"Right now, Washington is teaching the world a dangerous lesson: If you want to defend yourself from us, you had better mimic North Korea and pose a credible threat. Otherwise we will demolish you."

In a March 9, 2003 interview with Cynthia Peters, posted on the Znet website, Chomsky stated that the Bush administration is "even more extreme and forthright [than the Reaganites] in telling the world to get lost: either you authorize us to do what we want and remain 'relevant,' or you refuse to do so, in which case we will do what we want anyway and you will be kicked into the ashcan of history."

In the same interview Chomsky said that the Bush government is escalating the assault on the American people. Since these policies are very unpopular, the government can only maintain power by keeping the population frightened – "very much as in the 80s. They are following the same script very closely. That leads to more aggressive and violent policies, and a confrontational stance in world affairs."

Although Chomsky is an extremist and some are inclined to dismiss him as a self-promoting crank, his influence is obviously considerable. Besides, the point of this article is that he is by no means alone in issuing his denunciations of America. There are many who belong to the "blame America first" club, reaching even into the churches. Tom Driver of the Union Theological Seminary (New York) quoted Jesus' words "Those who take the sword will die by the sword" as a way to understand the events of 9/11.

He continued: "The violence that America has long exported has now come back upon us in a covert operation of masterly, although diabolic, planning.... Although our beloved America is a great and powerful nation, it is also a violent one both at home and abroad.... We have cultivated for ourselves a way of life that requires the impoverishment of others." (IRD, "Straight Answers to Moral Confusion in National Crisis," November 8, 2003)

Susan Sontag, another member of the blame America firsters has described American culture as "inorganic, dead, coercive, authoritarian." She believes that the white race *is* the cancer of human history and that America deserves to have its wealth taken away by the Third World. After the terrorist attacks on 9/11 she wrote an angry letter in *The New Yorker* castigating "the self-righteous drivel and outright deceptions being peddled by public figures," including our "robotic President," who failed to understand that those attacks were "undertaken as a consequence of specific American alliances and actions." (Roger Kimball, "The New Anti-Americanism," *The New Criterion*, October 2, 2001)

Andrew Sullivan, in his posted article on July 27, 2003, quoted from the left-wing website, Democratic Underground, a statement on the death of Qusay and Uday Hussein. "It's sad, really, that as despicable as they are, Saddam's family seems to be the lesser of two evils when you compare them to the wretched little bastard occupying the White House and destroying America in the process...."

Someone else had this to say on the same website: "What I really hate about the way our government has been taken over is that I'm at the point where I almost DON'T want any good to happen in Iraq, I WANT them to screw up, I WANT them to fail."

It would be nice to think that such outrageous opinions find no entrance into the American halls of higher learning. But such would be mistaken. The truth is that in the world of American academics the very same anti-American ideology is firmly entrenched. Chomsky is no exception.

Assistant professor at Columbia University Nicholas De Genova told a "teach-in" that he wished for "a million Mogadishus" on the American soldiers then fighting in Iraq." He explained: " The only true heroes are those who find ways that help defeat

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Family

Teach your children to revere nature

"When it comes to natural resources, we've maxed out our credit cards."
– environmentalist Paula Gonzalez

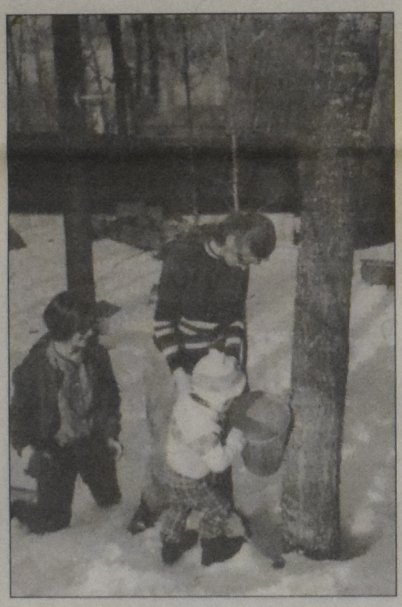
Most of us consider summer to be a relatively carefree time; the increased daylight positively affects our mood and allows more time for outdoor activities, school-related obligations are suspended, we dress lighter, driving conditions are better, we get several statutory holidays and we go away on vacation.

What doesn't lighten up, though, is our resource consumption, which results in land, air and water degradation. In fact, our ecological footprint – the amount of biologically productive land and sea area needed to produce the resources we use and absorb the wastes we produce – gets even heavier, due to often excessive lawn and garden watering and car washing, increased car travel (day tripping or driving back and forth to the cottage) and use of pesticides, gas-powered lawn mowers, air conditioners and motorboats.

Never is humanity's mistreatment of our environment more evident than in the summer, when we hear on the news the smog advisories and listings of beach closures, walk along the waterfront and witness the dead fish and the unmistakable band of smog on the horizon, or sidestep litter in public places.

The environmental crisis is also a spiritual problem

Our collective carelessness is incredibly short-sighted, given that we all have a stake in environmental sustainability. As scientist and environmentalist Dr. David Suzuki states, our health is "intimately tied to…the quality of the air we breathe, the food we eat and the water we drink" ("The Nature Challenge: What we do to nature, we do to ourselves," *Alive*, May 2003).



The environmental crisis is also a spiritual problem, according to Father Jim Profit, co-ordinator of the Ecology Project of the Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice. In a recent workshop, he pointed out that since God reveals himself to us in all of Creation, our lack of respect for natural resources constitutes a denial of our relationship with our Creator. Profit termed this disengagement "ecological sin," adding that, "becoming an environmentalist is part of our calling as Christians."

Where to start?

I strongly suggest visiting the David Suzuki Foundation at www. davidsuzuki. org/ and taking the Nature Challenge.

From a listing of the top ten ways to conserve nature, participants are challenged to pick at least three to implement over the next year, and to ask federal party leaders to do the same. Actions include: reducing home energy use by ten per cent; choosing an energy-efficient home and appliances; eliminating home and garden pesticides; eating less meat; buying locally grown and produced food; driving a fuel-efficient car; walking, bicycling, carpooling or taking public transit once a week; choosing a home near work or school; supporting alter-natives to the car; and getting involved in environmental issues and spreading the word.

Sign up today and make it a family project, regularly monitoring your progress. Subscribe to the e-mail newsletter containing updates, resources and further action opportunities.

In addition to making lifestyle changes, it's important for us as parents to nurture in our children an appreciation of and respect for nature.

One way to do this is through family activities like hiking, canoeing, camping and visiting farms, conservation areas, provincial parks and wildlife sanctuaries. Of course, we should always heed the nat-uralist's motto, "Take nothing but pictures and leave nothing but footprints."

In our own backyard, we can set up a bird feeder, grow vegetables, plant a tree and monitor its growth, study insects and enjoy cloud watching and stargazing.

Another good idea is to subscribe to a nature magazine or borrow related books from the library and read them together.

We can also join an environmental organization, such as the David Suzuki Foundation, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Pollution Probe, Citizens for Renewable Energy, Ontario Clean Air Alliance (their e-mail alert list makes it easy to follow issues and take action), Ontario Great Lakes Renewal Foundation or the Bruce Trail Association. (Go to http://www.oen.ca/groups.html for links to dozens of national, provincial and regional groups.)

Here are some Christian organizations that will provide further reflection and information: *Evangelical Environmental Network & *Creation Care* Magazine: http://www.creationcare.org/ *Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies: http://www.ausable.org/au.main.cfm *The American Scientific Affiliation (ASA): http://www.asa3.org/

To those immobilized by despair about the ecological crisis, Dr. Suzuki offers hope: "Individual actions may seem small, but together they can change the world."

We're all part of the problem, and we all must be part of the solution.

***Lisa M. Petsche** is a mother of three and freelance writer.*

Anti-Americanism

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the U.S. military. If we really [believe] that this war is criminal… then we have to believe in the victory of the Iraqi people and the defeat of the US war machine." (*National Review*, April 21, 2003, p. 11). If times were normal, such advice would be deemed to be treasonous and would lead to serious consequences. But these are not normal times in the United States, and Mr. De Genova's position is safe.

I have great difficulty understanding how people come to the opinions of contempt and loathing as quoted here. What is most disconcerting is that these opinions are not restricted to a lunatic fringe, but are now part of the American mainstream – at least in the major opinion-shaping cultural institutions. But how does such hatred take root? What is the deepest motivation for the outpouring of such unrestrained feelings of bitterness and alienation? Who is responsible for nurturing such hatred of one's own country and government?

These are questions for which there are no easy answers, for they concern the rot at the root of the spiritual sickness that is afflicting the United States – and all the other western nations. These critics make some valid points, but their underlying worldview and resulting diagnosis instead of pointing to a cure is part of the disease. I will attempt an assessment in part four of this series.

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Fiction

The Field Stage

By Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

I didn't mean to eavesdrop, Arie thinks as he sits on an abandoned farm wagon beneath a maple tree in a muddy field. The April wind caresses his troubled face as he stares at the huge boulder beside the wagon and thinks about the conversation he heard an hour ago through the vent in the floor that leads to his parents' bedroom below his.

He mimics Heit, his Frisian father: "Don't cry. We won't be gone long."

In a higher voice to imitate Mem, his mother, he says, "Please stay!"

Parroting Heit, he answers, "I have to go. Otherwise I'll lose my job. You know we can't afford that. Little Tina is with God! We have that comfort." Arie pretends he is Heit awkwardly embracing Mem.

Now Arie's voice quivers like Mem's had. "I know she is, but still I need you here to support me." Feeling Mem's grief, Arie flings himself from the wagon and pounds the muddy ground.

"What are you doing?"

Startled, Arie sits up and sees his older brother standing over him.

"Acting again?" Wiebe sneers. "You're such a kid!" He yanks Arie up off the ground. "Come on! Supper's ready."

Arie punches Wiebe's arm and sprints to the house, his brother racing after him.

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Arie sits in his usual spot at the table next to Wiebe. "Let's pray," Heit says. He silences his six children with a stern glance. "Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for the food that is on this table. We thank thee for the jobs that we have. Please be with Ebbel, Teunis, Wiebe, and me when we drive to the lumber camp tonight. Protect Mem, Arie, Anna, and Jacoba while we're gone. Be with all of our relatives in Friesland." Heit pauses and clears his throat. "And Father, please comfort and strengthen us as tomorrow we remember Tina's death a year ago. Amen."

Arie peeks at Mem from behind his prayer-clasped hands. He sees her quickly wipe her eyes with her apron. Then he dashes through his prayer: "Thankyou-Godforthisfoodandblessittoourbodies." Jacoba and Anna, his younger sisters, do the same.

Mem begins to ladle up the soup.

"Arie," Heit says, "why are your clothes so dirty?"

"He was wailing on the ground," Wiebe says. "Sniveling like a girl."

"Is something wrong?" Mem asks.

"No," Arie says.

Wiebe smirks. "He was acting. Like usual."

Arie cringes.

Mem gives Wiebe a steaming bowl of vegetable soup, then hands one to Arie.

Arie stirs his soup again and again, but doesn't eat it. The other children ask for second helpings.

"Eat up, Arie," Heit says. "You're a growing boy."

Now's my chance, Arie thinks. "I am growing!" he says emphatically. "So, may I please go to the lumber camp, too? I'll work just as hard as everybody else."

Soup sprays from Wiebe's mouth as he blurts out, "Growing, hah! You're only eleven." He tweaks Arie's scrawny arm. "Just keep doing your little plays. You don't need muscle for that." Arie flings down his spoon. It bounces and lands in the soup pan. Soup splatters on Wiebe's face, and on the brass candelabra, devoid of candles, that decorates the center of the worn, but clean blue tablecloth.

"Arie!" Mem scolds.

Wiebe lunges at Arie. "You rotten –"

"Stop it! Now!" Heit bellows. "Arie, clean Mem's candelabra! Then go to your room. And you sit down, Wiebe!"

In the pantry at the back of the large kitchen, Arie bangs the candelabra down on the counter. It's not fair, he thinks. I'm old enough to go. I'm not staying home!

As he wipes the octagonal base of the candelabra and its nine branches, he momentarily forgets his anger, remembering how Mem had carried the candlestick in her oversized, flowered purse during the trip on the boat from the Netherlands to Canada six months ago. She had refused to have it packed with their trunks for fear that it would be lost. It had been a present to Mem from her friend, Tamar, a Jewish woman whom they'd harbored from the Nazis.

Arie takes the one, removable branch that projects from the front of the candelabra. With it he taps the other eight branches, as if he is playing an xylophone, first softly, then louder and louder. Then he says, "Ladies and gentlemen! Welcome to Arie's Theater! Presenting 'The Trials of Arie'!"

Snap. Heit grabs Arie's shoulder. "I didn't send you here to act some more."

"I can't help it. It always happens to me."

"I know it does," Heit says. "But that's no excuse. Now go to your bedroom."

Arie doesn't go to his bedroom. Instead, he goes to his under-the-stairs-hide-out, the deep closet beneath the stairs that leads to the second story of the farmhouse. Tiny shafts of light filter in through the cracked stairs and illuminate the shadowy darkness of his peaceful, private place. Dented, brown suitcases, used during their voyage, line one wall.

Often, while Arie is imagining characters and creating plays in the closet's solitude, he hears above him the sound of footsteps, ascending or descending the creaky, wooden stairs. By the heaviness or lightness, the swiftness or slowness of the footsteps, he can tell who is passing by and even what mood they are in. The sound of Mem's footsteps hardly vary, he thinks. Most days her feet drag like the solemn mourners in Tina's funeral procession.

When Arie hears Jacoba and Anna run past the closet door and outside, he sneaks out of the closet, tiptoes up to the bedroom he shares with Wiebe, and rests on his bed.

Later, Heit comes in and sits down on Wiebe's bed. "It's hard on you being left behind. I know that."

"I'm big enough to go with you!" Arie exclaims.

"I know you are. And with the way you're growing, you'll be working with us soon enough. Maybe in two years. But meanwhile can you remember one important thing?"

"What?"

"Muscle isn't the only thing that's powerful."

"Yes, it is. Look at Wiebe. That's why he gets to go. He's bigger and stronger than I am."

"And older," Heit says. "Three years older. It makes a difference. But as I was saying, muscle isn't the only thing that's powerful. Your plays – they have their own kind of strength."

"Sure," Arie grumbles, unconvinced.

Heit sighs. "For now I need you here to help Mem."

Arie protests, "But she needs you! For tomorrow! Because of Tina."

Heit rubs his temples. He stands up wearily, goes to the window, and looks outside. After a moment he turns back to Arie. "I know," he says heavily. "But I can't stay. I have no choice. Five weeks. We'll be back before you know it." Heit turns and leaves the room.

Arie hears the car engine starting and the honking horn receding as the old Ford weaves out of the driveway and down the road. The front door slams as Mem and the girls come back inside the house.

Confused, Arie thinks, What does Heit mean anyway – that my plays have their own kind of strength?

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Burning porridge burbles in a pan perched on the pot-bellied wood stove. Beside it, steam billows from the black kettle. Plates, bowls, knives and spoons are strewn on the table.

Mem is standing stock still staring out the window. Like Lot's pillar-of-salt wife, Arie thinks, as he enters the kitchen, unnoticed.

"Mem, the porridge is burning!"

"Oh!" Mem grabs the pan. "Ouch! Where did I put that pot holder?"

"Here it is."

Mem takes it from Arie and lifts the pan from the stove. She ladles porridge into a bowl and gives it to him.

Arie scoops three, then four heaping spoonfuls of brown sugar over his porridge. He glances up to see if Mem has noticed his extravagance. She hasn't.

Anna clatters down the stairs and runs into the kitchen, shouting excitedly, "Jacoba says it's Queen Juliana's birthday today!"

Fiction

Arie looks at the calendar by the cupboards. April 30, 1953. "Remember when we were in that parade and saw Queen Juliana on her birthday?" he says to Mem. "We were wearing orange sashes. And Jacoba embarrassed us all when she kept on yelling, 'Hooray for the House of Orange!'"

Anna races wildly around the kitchen, shouting, "Hooray for the Oranges!" She bumps into chairs and then collides with Mem.

"Be quiet!" Mem barks. "Stop jumping!"

Anna pouts and wails, "That's not nice!" She runs out of the kitchen.

Arie gulps down the remainder of his brown, sugary porridge. "I'll chop some wood," he says warily.

Arie escapes to the shed and finds the axe. He swings it above his head and strikes a log – crack. I'm scared when Mem is sad and angry, he thinks –crack. I wish Heit was here – crack. He could comfort Mem – crack. I can't comfort her – crack. I can't help her – crack. Why is Mem mad at me anyway – crack? What did I do wrong – crack?

The log splits.

Arie glances up at the brilliant sun, tears dazzling in his eyes. With his sleeve, he wipes them away and rubs his runny nose. A hawk flies high above him. The sun gleams yellow-orange against its wings. Orange! he thinks. I know! That's what I'll do to help Mem forget about Tina.

He flings the axe to the ground and runs into the empty kitchen. He hears the girls laughing through their open bedroom door. Darting up the stairs, he calls softly, "Jacoba! Anna!"

"What?" Jacoba asks.

"Come on! To my hide-out."

"Your hide-out?" Anna asks. "Where is it?"

"Follow me." Arie leads them to his under-the-stairs-hide-out and shuts the closet door behind them. "Here's what we'll do. Jacoba, you get one of Mem's slips and a piece of rope. Maybe there's some in the shed."

"What for?" Jacoba asks.

"You'll see. Do you know where Mem put our orange sashes from the parade?"

"I think they're in the trunk with all her sewing things," Jacoba says. "What's going on? Are we putting on a play or something?"

"Anna, you get some paper," Arie interrupts. "I'll get our sashes, straight pins, and scissors from the sewing box. And I'll get some potatoes and the bucket. When you've got everything, meet me in the field by the wagon."

Arie inches open the closet door. "Hurry!" he commands.

The house creaks with the secretive feet of the children: seeking slip, sashes, and scissors; purloining pins, potatoes and paper; smuggling bucket and rope.

* * * * * * * * * * *

"Mem, come outside. There's someone here to meet you," Arie says as he runs into the kitchen.

"Who?" Mem asks as she clears porridge bowls from the table.

"She didn't give her name, but she wants to talk to you."

Mem dries her chapped hands on her apron. Then she unties the bow, takes the apron off, and sets it on a chair.

Arie and Mem go outside, down the crumbling, cement stoop. Mem walks past the cedar bushes toward the front of the house.

"Not that way." Arie points toward the field.

"In the field? Who would want to meet me there?"

"Some lady."

"Why doesn't she come to the house?"

"I don't know. She just said to get you."

When they reach the wagon, Mem says, "Where is she?"

"Sit here on this rock," Arie says. Then he shouts: "Hear ye! Hear ye! Arie's Theater presents 'Queen Juliana Visits Canada'."

Jacoba swings down from the maple tree onto the wagon. She is wearing Mem's slip, tied at her waist by a thin, yellow rope. A paper crown rests on her braided hair.

Arie bows. "Your Majesty, this is your golden coach. Look at it glimmer." He reaches under the wagon for the steel bucket, then hands it to Queen Juliana. "A gift for you, Your Majesty." The bucket is filled with oranges that Arie has made out of potatoes covered in pieces of orange sash held in place with straight pins.

"And with Her Majesty is her lady-in-waiting, Lady Annabella." Anna swings from the maple tree onto the wagon. She sits solemnly beside Jacoba.

"Queen Juliana is kind and gracious," Arie says. "She smiles on her Dutch citizens so far from home in a strange land. Come, Queen Juliana, step down from your wagon – I mean your golden coach – and greet your loyal Dutch citizen." Turning to Mem, he says, "You pretend to be homesick for Friesland."

Queen Juliana, firmly grasping the bucket, clutches Arie's arm and lunges from the wagon. Her slip drags in the mud behind her. Lady Annabella quickly rescues it and tries to brush it clean.

Queen Juliana smiles benignly and shakes Mem's hand. "Please, have an orange." She hands Mem a sash-covered potato. "Shall we sing our national anthem to help us remember our dear fatherland?"

Mem nods. Together they sing Het Wilhelmus. Mem's voice quavers. Tears trickle down her cheeks.

Arie beams at Mem. What acting! he thinks. The singing stops.

"What do we do now?" Jacoba whispers.

"The end!" Arie pronounces. "You all did a wonderful job! Especially you, Mem! You didn't even have time to practice."

Mem puts her head in her hands and sobs.

"The play is over, Mem," Arie says.

Jacoba nudges Arie and whispers, "She's crying. Really crying!"

"Not pretending?" Arie asks. "I didn't want to make her cry! I wanted to help her forget about Tina."

Arie's face flushes hot. He abruptly turns and runs through the field and into the woods. Branches scratch his face. He runs on and on. Suddenly he trips over a black slab of ice and falls headlong onto brittle stubs of weed and silt-covered ground. He sits up. Huge slabs of ice, covered in dirt and debris, line a rushing creek. The ice has been pushed many meters away from the creek by thrashing spring water that has now receded. He walks to the creek and splashes freezing cold water against his face.

A dog barks. Arie follows the sound till he finds a gray-white husky lurching on her chain. The husky yelps excitedly at the sight of Arie. He drops to his knees beside the dog and frees her chain from branches that protrude from between ice slabs. The husky runs circles around him. He squats down and the dog sloppily licks his face. "Whoa there. Good girl," he says as he grabs the dog's chain. "Come on! I'm taking you home."

In his backyard, Arie sees Mem hanging out wet towels.

The husky yelps.

"Where have you been?" Mem calls out. "And whose dog is that?"

"I don't know. I found her by the creek."

Jacoba and Anna run from the kitchen. "A dog!" Anna exclaims. The husky yaps and springs on them.

"She belongs to somebody," Mem says.

"But no one lives near here. May we keep her? Please! I'll take care of her," Arie pleads.

"Only till someone comes for her."

They tie up the dog to the post by the shed. "We don't have much extra food," Mem says. "And then to feed a dog, too?" She pauses. "But she'll be good company."

Later, in the kitchen Mem sets brown bread, butter, and cheese on the table for lunch. She boils water for tea and pours glasses of milk. "Get the oranges, Arie," she says, with the trace of a smile.

"What oranges?" he asks.

"Did you forget already?" she asks.

"Oh! You mean the potato-oranges?" he asks sheepishly.

"Yes," Mem answers. "They're on the back stoop." Arie gets the bucket and places it on the counter in the pantry.

"Not there!" Mem says. "By the candelabra."

Arie thinks, the rusty bucket, filled with musty potato-oranges, beside the candelabra? My play made Mem cry. So why does she want the potato-oranges beside her special candelabra?

* * * * * * * * * * *

"Queen Juliana! Queen Juliana!"

Arie wakes up with a start. Why is Mem calling the queen? he wonders as he blinks in the morning light. He bolts out of bed and darts down the stairs, but he stops at the kitchen door when he hears Mem talking.

"Down, Queen Juliana! Behave yourself! Was breakfast tasty?"

The dog barks.

"Ah, Queen Juliana, I'm glad you're here. You remind me of Blackie, my childhood dog. You want to know something? I used to talk to him like I'm talking to you."

"Arie's play," she sighs.

Arie holds his breath.

"I couldn't stop crying. Poor Arie! He thought I was pretending to cry. He brought me back to our farm in Holland. The holsteins. The green, flat land. The spring tulips. And to Tina's grave. All the things that I left behind."

Anna bounds down the stairs and rams into Arie, playfully shoving him into the kitchen.

"Good morning," Mem says. The husky jumps on Anna.

"Down, doggie!" Anna says. "Mem, we

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Fiction

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have to pick a name for the dog."

"I've picked one," Mem says. "Meet Queen Juliana."

"Mem!" Arie protests. "You can't name the dog after Queen Juliana. That's disrespectful!"

"Not really. I guess it depends on how you look at it. You found the dog on Queen Juliana's birthday, so I thought it suited. And then each time I call her name I'll be reminded of what you did for me by putting on the play."

"What did I do for you?" Arie asks, surprised.

"I was explaining that to Queen Juliana," Mem says. "Your play made me cry about all the people and things I left behind. But after I stopped crying, I started to remember some of the other plays that you put on during the time when we were still all together and happy. Remember the time you put a straw hat on Tina so she could be a farmer in one of your plays? Wasn't that just after she turned one? She could barely walk. And she giggled and squealed so much that her hat kept falling off. We laughed so much."

Arie listens, amazed, not knowing what to think.

"Do you understand what I'm trying to say?" Mem continues. "You wanted to help me forget my sadness about Tina, but instead you helped me remember her. Especially all the good times with her. And that's what I needed more than anything else."

Mem smiles and hugs Arie. Then Arie understands what Heit means about his plays having their own kind of strength.

"Now go and call Jacoba out of bed," Mem says. "We'll go for a picnic to your field stage."

"Yeah!" Reel shouts. He runs up the stairs and knocks on Jacoba's door. "Get up! We're going to my field stage."

"Your what?" Jacoba asks.

"My field stage!"

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Eleven days later a red truck rumbles up the driveway, spitting gravel onto the grass. A fat man, puffing an enormous cigar, steps out of the truck.

"Hi," he says to Arie. "Have you seen a stray dog?"

With the little English Arie has acquired, he understands the man.

"Queen Juliana?"

"I'm not looking for a queen. Just my dog. Tore her chain clear out of the post. She's pregnant. I'd hate to see her come to a bad end."

The screen door slams as Mem comes outside. "What does he want?" she asks Arie in Frisian.

"Queen Juliana! Oh, Mem! Don't let him take her!"

"She's his," Mem says firmly.

"But Mem –"

"Get her from the shed."

Arie unties Queen Juliana and buries his face in her plush fur. "I'll never forget you." He leads the dog to the truck. Mem puts her arm around Arie as Queen Juliana jumps up on her owner.

The man gives Arie a sympathetic glance. "Thanks so much for taking care of my dog," he says. "I can't thank you enough." The man shakes Mem's and Arie's hands, and leaves.

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"We brought something back for all of you," Heit says as he leans against the car with Mem and the six children around him.

Heit hands Mem a brown bag.

"Candles!" she exclaims after she looks inside. "For the candelabra! Thank you so much!" She smiles at Heit and the children.

A red truck zips up the driveway and stops beside them. The fat man steps out. "How are you folks doing? I see you're having a regular party here. A birthday, is it?" he asks, pointing at the candles in Mem's hand.

"No," Arie says.

"Well, I figure you better light them up because if it's all right with your folks," he says to Arie, "I have something for you."

"What?" Arie asks.

"My husky had pups," the man says. "I'd like you to have one when the pups are weaned."

"Queen Juliana had pups!" Arie says to Heit and Mem in Frisian.

"Our good queen had pups?" Heit says. "Now I've heard it all!"

"We'll tell you about it later," Arie laughs. "May we have one?"

"Of course," Mem says.

"I may," Arie says to the man. "Thank you!"

"I'll be seeing you folks in a couple of weeks," the man says. He climbs into his truck and drives away.

"I'm going to light the candles tonight," Mem says, "to celebrate because you're all home! And because Arie is getting a pup!"

"Not that we need more light," Heit says, "now that it's shining on your face again."

Tom Brokaw expects Iraq's weapons of mass destruction to turn up soon

By Stefan J. Bos

AMMAN, JORDAN (ANS) — The seasoned news anchor of the American network NBC, Tom Brokaw (63), has suggested the United States will find Iraq's weapons of mass destruction as early as this month, but he urged Washington to also tackle religious tensions in the troubled nation.

"I do know the man who is in charge of the renewed effort to find [the weapons of mass destruction], and I went out to see him the other day," said Brokaw, presenter and Managing Editor of NBC Nightly News, in an exclusive interview with ANS in Amman, Jordan.

"They (the Americans) have seven and a half miles of documents. They are doing a very complete analyses. And he is a very honest professional, and he said: "I am confident that we have them." So I think there may be some news in that regard in about six weeks," Brokaw stressed after returning to Jordan from Baghdad.

Physical evidence

"They (the Americans) don't want to go public until they are confident that they have got scientists who are willing to publicly testify about what they did, physical evidence and documentation to back it up," Brokaw explained.

"The first evidence of that will likely be biological. Anthrax, smallpox, agents of that kind and than, after that, chemical and even some physical weapons that are illegal. Missiles and that kind of thing. I do think that they will get some concrete evidence (about) weapons of mass destruction," he said.

Yet, the television anchor made clear that finding these arms was not enough to make Iraq more stable, saying he was concerned about religious violence in the Middle East nation. He warned that U.S. President George W. Bush and other officials have not "a clear idea" about fears among persecuted minority Christians as well as other groups that Iraq will turn into a more radical Islamic state.

New federation

"That's an enormously important factor. I would not be surprised if ten years from now Iraq is a federation of some kind, with Shiites in the south, the Kurds in the north, and some combination of Sunnis and Christians and Shiites in the central part, maybe with a central governing council...," Brokaw said.

Tom Brokaw

"I am not even sure that the president or his principal advisers have a clear idea about how this is going to turn out. This is a work in progress. We don't have a light at the end of the tunnel yet. We only have a tunnel," said Brokaw, talking in the sound bites and his deep, rumbling, voice.

Brokaw is also concerned about the daily attacks against U.S. soldiers as dozens have been killed since President George W. Bush declared an end to major hostilities, May 1. "If these deaths continue every day , how much 'political will,' will there be at home to have the Americans stay there?" he wondered.

"I think no one knows that better than the people who are representing the United States in Iraq. They are in a race against time because they got to have some physical sign of progress before the American people, and the Iraqi people give up on it. "

Attention "slipping"

However the newsman seemed sad that the attention among Americans for the story of Iraq "is already slipping."

"That's why I went [to Baghdad]... It is a big investment on the NBC Nightly News and other programs to remind Americans of the enormous investments that they have there. We have about 150,000 soldiers there, its costing us four billion dollars a month," he said.

"The other difficulty is that America is a big country and that it has a lot of challenges of its own, including its domestic economy. We are a culture that when one job is finished, rushes on to the next one. I think what will keep the American people engaged, are these ambush attacks against U.S. troops. They are very unsettled by that, more and more, all the time."

But he also sees signs of hope and economic progress in Iraq, including the sale of satellite dishes and cell phones that were long banned under Saddam Hussein. "Its not just about Americans dying. There is also an effort to bring Iraqi policemen back to the job. The old Iraqi army got its back pay and then the U.S. is starting a new army, because they don't want the old Iraqi army that has so much resentment.... We have to stop making new enemies."

Happiness and weariness

Brokaw: "I was [in Iraq] twice last year, when there was that pervasive climate of fear, now there is a climate of tentative happiness and some weariness."

He accused European media of not mentioning enough these positive developments as they apparently cover Iraq differently than NBC and other American networks. "I think that Europeans are less inclined to see some of the American successes and more inclined to dwell on the failures. That's not unusual. I think that the president has irritated a lot of Europeans with the way he described what the way is...or is not."

He recalled a recent trip to Europe where he ran into a journalist from Belgium who criticized American policy. "I said: Look, I am not here to defend the American policies, on the other hand I trust that you are not trying to defend Saddam Hussein and what he has done. She was more inclined to overlook Saddam Hussein's rule because she was so outraged about the US-led sanctions against Iraq. It's a very complex situation, there is no question about it.

"I was with an American general the other day who had posted on his bulletin board: Rebuilding takes time, everyone must be patient. I think that's true."

Stefan J. Bos is Special Correspondent for ASSIST News Service on assignment in Iraq and Jordan.

Politics

Why are conservative Christians not calling for the impeachment of President Bush?

by Jim Payton

Just a few years ago, the religious right and the Republicans were incensed over President Clinton and his sexual dalliances. A full congressional inquiry was launched (under Republican pressure), and the religious right vehemently and openly lamented the sin which had disgraced the president and had embarrassed the American people.

Bill Clinton lied about what he had done – or, at least, he renegotiated what "having sex" meant. Hilary Clinton's recent book indicates that he certainly lied to her about the whole business. There is no question he lied – to her and to the American people. He avoided being impeached, but the Republicans and the religious right made loud noises for a long time about the president, what he had done, and what should be done to him. I remember visiting a friend in New York, a minister in a conservative Presbyterian church, during the time. The situation was on his mind so much that he asked me what people in Canada thought of President Clinton and his sexual misconduct.

Where, though, is the furor of the religious right now, when it is clear that President Bush lied to the American people in his State of the Union Address in January 2003? To be sure, people can quibble about just what he knew at that precise point about Iraq's alleged attempt to purchase uranium to make nuclear weapons. Perhaps he was misled by someone in the administration or the CIA; maybe he did not know *on that day* that he was working with bogus information. Where is the vaunted Republican concern for truth now, though?

Where does the buck stop?

Even if it could be argued that President Bush was given wrong information, is it not his responsibility – or, at the least, that of his close advisers – to make absolutely sure that such allegations, *with what he intended to pursue with them*, were rigorously checked out, to assure they were unassailably true? Perhaps Republicans want to point to some shadowy, as yet unnamed figure in the administration who let shoddy information mislead the president. But wait a minute – just where does the buck stop? Squarely on the desk in the Oval Office – at least, that's what presidents before the current one have said. So, shouldn't President Bush be held responsible for misleading the American people?

And even if the false information about Iraq and weapons of mass destruction in the State of the Union Address could be excused somehow, what about the ongoing, continued haranguing of the United Nations Security Council with variations on that same information? For weeks after the address, the US administration insisted to the UN Security Council that there was incontrovertible evidence of weapons of mass destruction. Somewhere along the line, *the administration knew that was not true* – but they kept insisting on it, calling for war against Iraq. It is now clear that the U.S. administration, with the blessing of George W. Bush, was lying to the Security Council. Shouldn't he be held responsible for trying to mislead the world?

We know what happened: the UN Security council didn't give in, so the USA and Great Britain, with a few minor hangers-on, launched an invasion of Iraq. The sole justification offered for it was the weapons of mass destruction Iraq supposedly had and was trying to produce. And we all know what happened: hundreds of American and British soldiers were killed and wounded, and thousands of Iraqi soldiers and civilians were killed and wounded.

But let's look again at how that all came to be. It rose out of a lie – one perhaps unwittingly made to the American people, to be sure, but never retracted to them. (How long ago did the current administration know better? Why didn't they 'fess up long ago?). That lie was repeated again and again, *ad nauseam*, to the Security Council. Indeed, the US administration browbeat the Security Council with what it knew (at some point along the line) was false information – in common parlance, a lie. But the US administration went ahead with it – so did President Bush, in various speeches and in public responses to questions.

Lies got thousands killed

Let's get all this in a bit of perspective. President Clinton engaged in some acts which (however he defined "having sex") violated his marriage vows, and he lied. He stained his reputation – and, evidently, a young woman's dress. Aside from embarrassment to the American public, though, no particular consequences for others on any large scale arose. Still, though, the religious right loudly denounced him for what he had done and the havoc it had caused.

But President Bush lied, and he used that lie repeatedly (either directly, himself, or indirectly, through administration spokespersons) to call for an invasion of Iraq. As a direct result of his claims (which somewhere along the line he and others in the administration knew were not true), thousands of human beings were killed and wounded: this president stained the uniforms and clothes of thousands of men and women – not with his semen, but with their own lifeblood. The consequences were enormous: thousands of human beings paid the price of the president's lies.

There is no commensurability here: President Clinton lied and got some sexual favors; President Bush lied and got thousands killed. Republicans, the religious right, and anyone concerned with morality, truth, and justice should repudiate both misuses of the Oval Office's privilege and power. But it doesn't take sophisticated insight to sense there is a huge difference in the respective significance of the two.

Perhaps we can understand that Republicans are not exactly eager to be as fastidious about presidential misconduct as they were a few years ago – after all, it's their guy in the Oval Office now. But isn't what's sauce for the goose sauce for the gander? Maybe all that huffing and puffing a few years ago was more an attempt to blow the Democratic White House down than it was a concern for morality, truth, and justice. Is there an entry for "hypocrisy" in their political dictionary?

Where is the concern for truth?

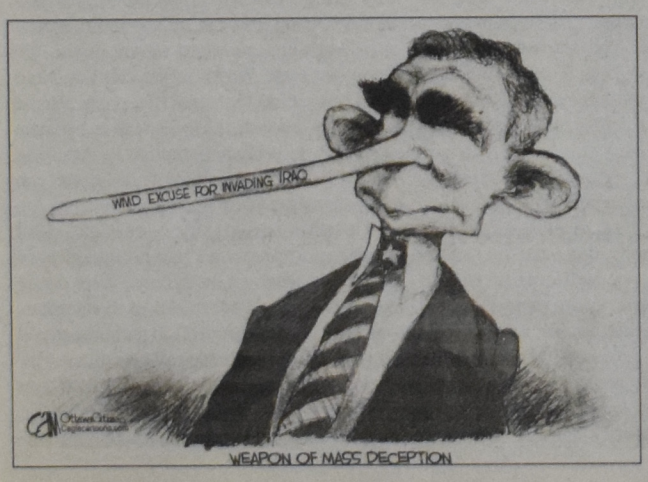
But regardless of how the Republicans react, where is the furor of the religious right in all this? Where is the concern for morality, truth, and justice now, when presidential lies have led to the death of thousands of human beings? Why hasn't the religious right denounced President Bush for what he has done and the havoc it has caused?

It makes you wonder. Is this another example of conservative Christians judging that the really important sins all begin about six inches below the belt buckle? Is this an indication that the religious right is more concerned with supporting the Republican Party than it is with morality, truth, and justice?

Oh, yes, I know – the Saddam Hussein regime was toppled. The world can be grateful his reign of terror is over. But President Bush, the US administration, and the religious right can't get off the hook by arguing that "the end justifies the means": conservative Christians, at least, have always condemned that casuistry. So, the results of the invasion of Iraq can't be used to avoid the questions raised here.

Where is the furor of the Republican Party's and the religious right's defenders of morality, truth, and justice now? If they can't speak up now, when it might be politically uncomfortable and inconvenient, they shouldn't expect anyone to listen to them in the future.

Dr. Jim Payton is Professor of History at Redeemer University College.



Hug a missionary

Rod Hugen

I had dinner last night with my Home Missions regional director. I was deeply touched again by his amazing encouragement and his wonderful capacity to listen. Waking up this morning I thought maybe I'd encourager you all to be encouragers. To that end, I present the following do's and don'ts –

DO:

Pray. Prayer changes things. Don't offer to pray if you never do it. Ask how you can pray. Missionaries are supposed to send out prayer letters, so when you don't get one, pray harder - they are probably going through fire or are way too depressed to think about writing one. Tell the missionary that you pray. It lifts our hearts.

Ask how the work is going. Missionaries love to talk about what they are doing and the dream God has placed in their heart. Try not to look at your watch or glaze over when they are in the middle of the most passionate part of their presentation.

Persist in asking how the work is going even when they seem unwilling to talk about it. We go through dark times when everything looks bleak and we wonder where God is. Just because the question becomes painful then, doesn't mean we shouldn't have to be called lovingly to answer it.

Ask questions that force the missionary to challenge his core beliefs and methodologies. Part of wrestling with our vision is hearing questions we don't like to hear.

Listen without judgment. It is hard not to judge the work according to your standards of how church should be or according to 'traditional' standards of how mission work was done. Church planting and missionary endeavors are by their very nature 'cutting edge'. It seldom, if ever, pleases the status quo to have new methods and styles explored because it inherently seems to reject what the status quo values. Allow the missionary to explain why they do what they do without expressing doubt about the outcomes.

Write a check. No ministry has too much money. Even a small gift is tangible proof that you care about

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Reflections on Synod 2003 by a visible minority

BuildingTrust
Vicky Van Andel Ed.

Advisers confer at Synod PHOTO COURTESY OF VICKY VAN ANDEL

Vicki Van Andel

The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church met for a week in June. It was held on the beautiful campus of Dordt College in the town of Sioux Center, Iowa. It turned out to be a week of fabulous summer weather, interesting debates, enjoyable conversations and good food and drink. Meetings started at 8:15 in the morning and ended at 9:00 at night except on Sunday when there were three worship services. Mixed in with these full days of work were a number of honorary banquets and a barbeque in Dr. and Mrs. Zylstra's garden. Then there were long walks with friends and preparations for the next day.

By now much has been written about the official proceedings at Synod, both in the *Christian Courier* and the *Banner*. The discussions were also recorded on the web, giving many people the opportunity to follow the proceedings from home. For that reason my reflections will focus more on my impressions and the unofficial.

The seven women advisers appointed by the Board of Trustees were Kathleen Boldenow, Thea Leunk, Diane Plug, Bonnie Smith, Jean Weening, Karen Wynbeek, and myself. We were seated at a long table next to the five ethnic advisers beside the official floor of synod where the delegates sat in groups of the Classes they represented. Two ethnic advisers were also women. Soon after we were introduced to each other as women we decided to get together and share a bit of ourselves and our lives. We also prayed together. During the week we did this several times and truly started to feel connected.

It was good to be at Synod in spite of the somewhat complex role of being a woman adviser at an all male church leadership gathering. It was an honor to fill that role though we were a very visible minority. We had the privilege of speaking on the floor of the assembly but did not vote.

Mixed feelings

Though it was an honor we also struggled with mixed feelings. We talked about these feelings and decided that each one of us would try to capture them in a few sentences in our own words. We wrote these down for ourselves and then combined them to form a paragraph. We asked the chair for permission to present this paragraph to the assembly towards the end of Synod so as not to interfere with the agenda. This permission was granted and one of the advisers, Diane Plug, read the following statement on behalf of the women advisers:

Your invitation to us to attend Synod 2003 in the role of women advisers was a true affirmation of our gifts. Our presence at this gathering has symbolized one more step in the difficult process within the Christian Reformed Church towards full inclusion of women.

Even though serving in this role has at times created an emotional rollercoaster within us it has also been an opportunity for us to serve God in new ways. It has been an agonizingly beautiful experience. We are grateful for the opportunity.

However, our role as women advisers has symbolized the absence of the voice of women at Synod. We long for full participation in all aspects of the life of the church. We long to serve God in a church which truly values both genders. We long for a voice and a vote in all areas of the governance of the church.

Thank you for making us feel welcome and listening to us. We trust that God will continue to guide us as we grow in our understanding of God's will regarding our roles in God's awesome kingdom.

Our statement may not have been officially recorded because it was made near closing time. But we felt grateful for the opportunity to publicly express our feelings and thoughts. It somehow made me feel we had a chance to tell it like it is.

Personal experiences

There were many personal experiences that were very enjoyable for me during my week at Synod: my talks with all the different people, my interaction with an older man who told me about his life stating, "I'm surprised you are interested, I am an old man and people tend not to see me," my conversation with a professor from seminary who gave me an overview of the components of a sermon and then stated: "Writing a sermon is like figure skating, there is the compulsory part to it and a free skating part." I frantically scribbled his ideas on a napkin, grateful for a quick free course. I also enjoyed the countryside in Iowa.

To be a woman adviser at Synod, a woman needs to be recommended by her church council. This recommendation goes to the Board of Trustees. Each year a few women from the year before are asked to be advisers for another year, and a few new women are invited. This process will continue until the year 2005 at which time the role of women in the church is up for review. Until then it is not to be officially discussed. That felt quite evident. But there is hope. And we need to keep praying.

Vicky Van Andel is the editor of Building Trust. Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to cntact her via fax at 1-780-473-0970, or e-mail at: vicky@telus.net

Hug a missionary

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the work and your gift will certainly gladden the heart of the planter. If all else fails, at least pick up the check for lunch, dinner, coffee, whatever.

Write a note. You don't have to write a five page treatise. A simple postcard with the words 'I prayed for you today' and your name will lift a missionaries heart for a month.

Celebrate attempts rather than results.

Come walk with us! Take a flier, leave your comfort zone, and come join us. Even if you can't participate fully in the ministry, come and offer your time and talents. We will love and praise you and thank you and generally slobber all over you if you offer yourself in our service – his service.

DON'T:

Offer suggestions unless the missionary begs you to. Unless you have grown to value what the ministry core group values and are pursuing a similar dream, your suggestions will probably not be helpful anyway.

Play the comparison game. We already feel badly enough about our 'successfulness'. We are all in unique settings and no two ministries are ever alike so don't discourage us by telling about how your third cousin did a similar thing in Alberta and how fabulously it failed or succeeded. We don't want to hear it.

Assume the missionary is lazy or a ball of fire because of the level of activity that you or others observe. Some of our best spent time is often expended staring at our navels or in the privacy of our prayer closets. It is sometimes far better work we do there than if we were hand-delivering twenty thousand fliers. Likewise, long houred days racing from place to place doesn't mean anything of value has been accomplished.

Rub the missionary's nose in past mistakes. Because we try carefully thought out new things doesn't mean they will work. We are well aware of our past failures and have already beaten ourselves up over them. Your added blows are what we called 'dog piling' back in first grade.

Be paternalistic. You are not our daddy and you don't know best. This is especially true for those who think they know best. And especially true for those who know they know best.

Presume you belong to the mature church simply because you are part of an established church. The core group of most missionary endeavors are among the most incredibly mature Christians you will ever meet. It is demeaning to assume we are in need of help because we are immature. We are not little churches trying to grow up to be like traditional churches. We are emerging churches in need of resources. Lack of resources is not a sign of immaturity.

Talk about the missionary unless what you say builds up and lifts. Our work is discouraging enough without having to hear through the rumor mill how our work is 'really going'. Don't ever talk about the missionary when you can talk to the missionary. Don't kick us when we are down. We know we suck. We know we can't do what God has called us to do. The very reason we know the task is God's task is because we can't possibly accomplish it. Assuring us we have bitten off more than we can chew is self-evident.

Question our loyalty. Sometimes God moves us to places we had no intention of going and what we thought we were doing is not what we end up doing. Sometimes our loyalty to the group God gathers around us conflicts with our loyalty to those who sent us. We don't like to choose, so if you can help it don't force us to.

Ever stop praying.

Opinion

Yes . . . but

August 15, 2003. Yes...but Well, I am back. Somewhat reluctantly. I can't exactly pinpoint why. Perhaps because I know that there are people out there who loathe my columns. I can understand that. Most of it is idle chatter and, sometimes, quite biased.

That is one reason why I have re-named my column from 'Nose for News' to Yes...but. Agreeing, seeing a point, but at the same time voicing a different view. Who knows, perhaps I will strike a bit more conciliatory tone. Perhaps. I won't guarantee it. I will alternate this sort of general writing with some thoughts on money. That column I have named "Mainly on Money," but again no ironclad assurance that it will be confined to monetary matters alone. Hence the qualification of ' mainly.' So in two weeks time you can read – if you are so inclined – where we financially are going. Or not. Oh, yes. That nose picture has disappeared. I still have my nose and still stick it into all sorts of business, but the picture you see shows a blue-eyed man, greying, but not grey, looking up. That's me. A slender 142 lbs, thanks to running, biking, skiing, and, lately, a lot of grass mowing. I have a cordless, solar powered, heavy, lawnmower. Only good for 20 minutes.

Summer travels

It's been a good summer in Tweed. The rains came on time and visitors came and went. A double blessing. Traveling was part of it too. We showed Dutch relatives Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec City. It seemed that this part of Canada, in these summer days, wås almost exclusively populated with the young, the vibrant and the good looking. Ah, Quebec. When I was in Quebec City years ago at a convention, I heard a speaker say that people go to winter in Florida, to summer in Europe and to fall in Quebec. Well, this was not the case with us, respectable tourists. I did talk to an older couple from Chicago who were afraid to go to Toronto because of SARS, yet risked the dangerous highways – a person has a million more chances to be killed in a car accident than to contract SARS – but then human nature is difficult to fathom. On our way back we saw a brand new van smashed to smithereens on the 401 in an apparent rollover. Horrible to watch. It reminded me that annually 45,000 of us in North America are killed through our favorite pasttime – driving – which, worldwide, claims more than one million lives, not counting the many, many more millions injured or maimed. Should I mention air pollution, perhaps equally dangerous? But then 20 percent of our jobs are connected to the automotive industry: apparently we are rather dead than unemployed. OK. Enough chatter. Serious business. That's what my column is all about, isn't it?

Tax relief for the rich

Well. It's summer, so let's not talk about Iraq. It only makes me mad how this country is becoming more chaotic by the day. It's easy to start a fight. All you have to do is work up enough anger and think about nothing else and then, before you know it, everything the other party is doing is seen as motivated by evil. That's how crimes of passion are committed. I know that leaders of aggressive nations are just like us and subject to the same human weaknesses. It's easy to pick a fight, especially if the opponent is far inferior. It's hard to make up and repair. Now the USA and Britain – who should have known better – are in a real fix.

No, don't get me going on Iraq. There are better things to talk about.

Taxes, for instance. Oh, to be rich, real rich, and living in the USA. The tax burden of the 400 wealthiest there has decreased by 50 percent in the last 10 years. The USA is a very Christian country. The Bible – Matthew 25 verse 29 – says that those who have shall be given more and those who don't have even what they have will be taken away from them. That's the 'Christian' thing Bush is doing: massive tax cuts for those who have it all, while the poor and working class are clobbered by reduced services, higher tuition, tax increases and fees for whatever was free before. That Jesus was betrayed for 30 silver pieces and had a distinct dislike for money – always sided with the poor – is not in the Republican bible. No, don't get me going on that murderous stuff, either. Also murderous for my mood. It's summer after all, and, with a week away from home again, after a week of making our property look half-decent after having been away for three weeks, I now came back seeing our vegetable garden a weed paradise: crab grass, milkweeds, purslane, goldenrod, lambs quarters ruling over my precious beets and beans. But, it's summer. It's warm. A Sleeman is just perfect. Neither Bush nor the state of Ontario's electricity supply, will spoil my glorious summer evening. Yet, in the back of my mind I wonder whether another heat wave will cause the lights to go out for us and for Eves & Co.

No, I will not get into that. Still, in the back of my currently uncluttered mind is another silly question popping up: Suppose that Bush is re-elected. The very thought terrifies me. I know I shouldn't engage in such destructive thinking, not on such a loverly day. But then, who will oppose the man who is out to raise $200 million, more than all the other democrat hopefuls together? Are there no courageous politicians left south of the border? Is the USA that bad that it deserves such a leader? Oh for a Stephen Lewis there, or another Jimmy Carter.

Melting snow

Suppose . . . and here comes one of my crazy thoughts . . . suppose that 2010 comes along, the year of the Winter Olympics, the highway from Vancouver to Whistler has been fixed at an expense of $600 million – sorry BC government workers, no raise for you for 7 years, sorry hospitals, no extra funding – so that the BMWs and the Volvo station wagons with skis on top and fashionable BPs (beautiful people) inside, intending to whiz down Whistler to set new world records . . . suppose that when they arrive there is no snow.

Good bye to the so hard fought Vancouver Olympics, good bye to billions of dollars in investment in infra structure, facilities, luxury dwellings, hotels. No snow on Whistler in 2010? Not too farfetched. I remember flying over Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania in 1995. On the way to Malawi in South-Central Africa, the pilot of the KLM machine alerted us to the snow-capped peak of this mountain, sticking out at almost 20,000 feet, about 6,000 metres, above the clouds. Extensive studies by Professor Lonnie Thompson of Ohio State University made her suggest that by 2015 this mountain, three times as high as the highest top in Whistler, would be ice-free.

True, Kilimanjaro is in Africa, not too far from the equator, but by now we also know that Global Warming is advancing faster in the northern regions than in the tropical areas, with the result that arctic and alpine glaciers are receding faster than ever. Seven years is a long time when you are young. But it is as close as 1996, which seems like yesterday. A few days ago I heard a snatch of a news cast – I get my 'new' news from radio – and right away I went to my computer to get full particulars from the website of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), an impeccably respected UN organization that is not given to needless exaggeration. This group of weather experts, who, once a year, gives dry reports on global rainfall and cold figures on the world's weather hot spots, issued an unusual semi-annual announcement on global warming and extreme weather.

This Geneva-based body, to which Environment Canada and weather services of another 184 countries contribute, sounded an unprecedented warning that it had received ominous reports from Europe, America and Asia. In Southern France record temperatures were recorded in June, rising above 40° C in places, 5-7° C above average. Switzerland saw its hottest June and July in 20 years. The U.S. had 562 tornadoes in May, causing 41 deaths. The previous record was 399 in June 1992. At least 1,400 people died in India with 45° C weather, 2-5° C higher than normal. Sri Lanka had such heavy rainfall that 300 people perished from flooding and landslides. Great Britain experienced the hottest June since 1976.

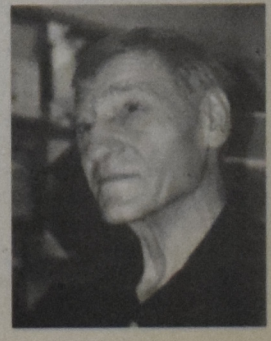
The WMO says that, although the unstable world of climate change has long been a prediction, it now is a reality. Considering land temperatures only, last May was the warmest on record. It is quite possible, now even likely, that 2003 will be the hottest year ever. Weather statistics, kept since 1860, tell us that the 10 hottest years have all been since 1990, with the three top years 1998, 2002 and 2001.

Weather in the White House

Of course we can ignore this new weather symptom. Most people and businesses go on as if nothing is the matter. The US president, so adored by many, is going a step further. He is lobbying to amend a provision of the Kyoto Protocol that would phase out methyl bromide. This is the single most ozone-destructive chemical still used in industrial nations. Scientists estimate the ban would prevent 2 million cases of cancer in the U.S. and Europe alone. Bush's proposal would increase the chemical's use threefold.

The White House not only is writing off disturbing weather patterns as irrelevant, the president actually directed a major re-write of an assessment prepared by his own Environmental Department on climate change, removing mentions of risks to health and atmosphere posed by rising global temperatures. Among the deliberate alterations were a reference to and a graphic of a 1999 study showing that global temperatures had risen sharply in the past decade compared with the previous 1,000 years. Instead – not surprising with the oil-obsessed administration – it cites a study, partly sponsored by the American Petroleum Institute, that disputes those findings, stating that the Petroleum people were more reputable and more unbiased and more up-to-date.

Global Warming? Glaciers in Switzerland are melting so fast that entire mountain sections, long held in place by permafrost, are collapsing. Suppose that climate change is happening now, will, Whistler still have sufficient snow seven short years from now? Or will the skiers need roller blades to speed down the slopes? What is sure is that the world's weather is going haywire, and the White House is only accelerating this through its short-sighted denial.



Along with many readers who called or wrote letters, we welcome Bert Hielema back from exile in distant Tweed. It's good to hear his voice again.

Come on, you who love to disagree with him, 'fess up: you missed him, didn't you!

Sock it to us, Bert!

Business Directory/Advertising

WHAT IS THE NETHERLANDS BAZAAR?

The Committee "Netherlands Bazaar" has been in existence for over forty years. It is a non-denominational organization that works in consultation with the Netherlands Consulate, religious and community leaders, members of the medical community, Children's Aid Societies, and social service organizations. The services of all our workers are on a volunteer basis.

Who do we help?

The Netherlands Bazaar is held once every two years. 100% of the funds raised are used to provide assistance to needy families of Dutch extraction living in Ontario, all of whom have been stricken by illness or other misfortune and need assistance. Thanks to the generosity of the Bazaar supporters, we were able to distribute 900 food parcels over the past two years, 300 children from needy families were given the opportunity to attend summer camp. Without the support of concerned members of the community, this work could not continue.

The Committee "Netherlands Bazaar" relies on YOU to inform us when need arises in the community, just as we rely on YOUR participation in our bi-annual Bazaar.

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Campus ministers Brian Walsh and **Geoff Wichert** welcome new and returning students to the University of Toronto at **TWO EVENTS** during the first week of classes.
On **Tuesday, September 9, at 7:30AM** (yes you read the time correctly!) the first **Wine Before Breakfast** worship service of the year will be held in the chapel at Wycliffe College. Dr. Walsh preaching. And then on **Thursday, September 11** the Graduate Christian Fellowship will hold its **opening reception** in the CRC chaplain's office from **5.30PM until 8.00PM**
(undergraduates are always welcome).
Both events happen at Wycliffe College, 5 Hoskin Ave.
For more **information** about ministry events check out our web site at

York University, Toronto

York Campus Ministry

Campus Minister: Mr. Shiao C. Chong
Shared Office: York Varsity Christian Fellowship Office, Room 312, Student Center, York University
Cell: 416-707-5315 **Email**: ycm@sympatico.ca
Mailing Address: 2670 Inlake Court, Mississauga, ON L5N 2A7
The York Campus Ministry partners with the Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship chapter at York. It serves undergraduate, graduate and international students.
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Please join the **Start of Year BBQ** on **September 20**, Saturday, 5 pm, at the Campus Minister's home.

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Adrienne Schaafsma, Student Assistant bluetomatoes@hotmail.com (519) 674-0458
Michael Veenema, Chaplain at University of Western Ontario mveenema@uwo.ca (519) 438-1242

Quotes - Food for thought

◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆

The defense, for myself and for those for whom I am responsible, must be a conscious defense. We cannot assume that, because we are Christians, in the full biblical sense, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, automatically we shall be free from the influence of what surrounds us. The Holy Spirit can do what He will, but the Bible does not separate His work from knowledge; nor does the work of the Holy Spirit remove our responsibility as parents, pastors, evangelists, missionaries, or teachers. ...

Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God who is There*

The final reality, and the ultimate fact of our total situation to which we need to be adjusted, is God. That indeed would be my definition of God: God is He with whom we have ultimately to do, the final reality to which we have to face up, and with whom we have, in the last resort, to reckon. ... John Baillie

◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆

A conversion is incomplete if it does not leave one integrated into the Church. By this we do not mean any particular part of the Church; what we do mean is that conversion must leave one linked in loving fellowship with one's fellow believers. Conversion is not something simply between a man and Jesus Christ, with no other person involved. True, it may start in that way; but it cannot end in that way. Conversion is not individualistic. It is, in fact, just the opposite. It joins man to his fellow men, and certainly does not separate him from them.

... William Barclay, In the Hands of God

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Thank you

Thank you very much
for the many who have sent us
best wishes for our
50th Wedding Anniversary.

Dorothy & Stan Antonides

Thank you all
for the best wishes on the occasion
of our 50th Wedding Anniversary.
Your numerous and various responses
have been an inspiration to us.

Evert & Klaziena Wassink

Anniversaries

Toronto, Ont. Orangeville, Ont.
1953 August 29 2003

With thanksgiving to God,
we hope to celebrate the
50th Wedding Anniversary of

SIDNEY AND TONI RYZEBOL

Love and congratulations from your children and grandchildren.
Anda & Dennis De Jong, *Toronto*
Antonia, Rejeanne
Ben & Teresa Ryzebol, *Orangeville*
Derek, Rudy, Tara, Sidney
Peter S. Ryzebol, *Orangeville*
Brant & Janet Ryzebol, *Orangeville*
Reuben, Kiana, Lucas

We hope to celebrate with an **Open House** on Saturday, Sept 6, 2003 from 2 - 4 p.m. in the Christian Reformed Church of Orangeville ON, 50 Blind Line.
Best wishes only, please.
Address: RR 7, Orangeville
ON L9W 2Z3

"...seek first His kingdom
and His righteousness,
and all these things
will be given to you as well...."

On Saturday, September 6, 2003

ALBERT AND WILMA GRIN

together with their fine sons
REUBEN, JESSE, and **BROCK**
plan to celebrate their
25th Wedding Anniversary!

Please join us for this celebration at our **Open House** anytime between 1:00 and 5:00 p.m.
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grinfamily@sympatico.ca

1968 August 17 2003
Psalm 121

With thankfulness to the Lord we share in the joy of our parents

JOHN AND JEAN VANDERKOOY (nee Reitsma)

as they celebrate their **35th Wedding Anniversary**
Congratulations Mom & Dad, Grandma & Grampa
Love from: Alisa & Jacco DeLange - Keaton, Mitchell, Mark
Joy & Peter Schuurman
Susanne & Daniel Wood - Sember, Emma
John Vanderkooy & Andrea Curry
Rosine & Ian Cubitt
Home address: Box 569, Harriston ON N0G 1Z0

1953 2003

"For this God is our God forever and ever; He will be our Guide even to the end."
Psalm 48:15

LEN AND SHIRLEY VAN RAAMSDONK (nee Span)

With praise and thanksgiving to God we congratulate our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents on their
50th Wedding Anniversary.

Mary & Bob Corner
Sarah, Angela, Deborah, Daniel, Leah, Bethany
John & Laureen Van Raamsdonk
Jodi & Jason Reimer (Alyssa)
Peter, Brittany, Eric, Larissa, Richard
Teresa & Andrew Ponsen
Daniel, Felicia
Caroline & Gordon Kralt
Justin, Matthew, Alicia, David
Jennifer & Paul Brink
Jesse, Erin, Annika

An **Open House** will be held in their honor on Saturday, Sept 13, 2003 from 2 - 5 pm at the Community Christian Reformed Church of Meadowvale, 2630 Inlake Court Mississauga ON L5N 2A7
Best wishes only, please.

Home address: 39 Rexway Dr.
Georgetown ON L7G 1P9

1963 August 23 2003

HARRY AND DIANE FLEDDERUS (nee Nykamp)

With thankfulness to God for his love and faithfulness, we celebrate with our parents their **40th Anniversary.**
Congratulations!

With love: Sue & Roger Hogeveen
Shayla, Alex, Adam
Darryl Fledderus
Jackie & Mike Viet

Home address: RR #4
Simcoe ON N3Y 4K3

1978 August 26 2003

GERALD AND RITA KLEIN-GELTINK (Streutker)

Congratulations on your
25th Wedding Anniversary
and may God continue to bless you.

With love from:
Brian & Christine
Mark & Sarah
Kevin & Meghan
Bradley

Address: 204 Myers Road
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Obituary

July 24, 1933 July 27, 2003
Ommen, The Netherlands Thunder Bay, Ontario

ANNIGJE "ANN" BREUKELMAN (nee Van Lenthe)

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast." Eph.2:8,9

On July 27, 2003 at the age of 70 years, a dear wife, mother and grandmother went home to be with her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. After many years of deteriorating health, she died at home with her family at her side. Ann was born in the Netherlands on July 24, 1933. She married Egbert Brreukelman also of the Netherlands. The happy couple immigrated to Canada in 1954.

Ann's joy in life was her family, her husband of 49 years, her children and grandchildren. She always had a smile when they came through the door. Her care and concern for others was always first. Ann was a member of the United Reformed Church. Her comfort in life was that she belonged to her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. She believed that her salvation was a gift of God. Her faith and love for the Lord was a strong testimony and comfort for the rest of the family. She will be dearly missed by her husband, Egbert, who with quiet strength and loving care diligently helped her each day with her many needs.

She is survived by:
her husband of 49 years, Egbert.
Her children and grandchildren:
Fred & Amy - Melanie, Allison, Brenda, Carolyn, Katrina, Eric, Ben, *Thunder Bay*
Jerry & Jill - Laura, Lisa, Greg, Kimberly, *Thunder Bay,ON*
Wilma & Gerry Makkinga - Michelle, Mark, Brian, Kevin, Michael, Randy *Red Cliff,AB*
Ed & Henrietta - Aaron, Brandon, Devin, *Thunder Bay,ON*
Arnold & Veronica - Rob, Jason, Malorie, Amanda, Jessica, *Abbotsford,BC*
Calvin & Karin - Colin, Kelsey, Ryan, Sarah, *Abbotsford,BC*
Alfred & Brenda - Caitlyn, Lyndsay, Sarah, Christine, *Thunder Bay,ON*

Also survived by sisters and in-laws: Jen Schutte, Fem Delange, Dien & Jan Marsman, Mien & Gerrit Brand, Gerri & Cos Bisschop, all of *the Netherlands.* Marge Delange, *Abbotsford BC*, Jo & Johan Bakker, Hendrik & Sien Veurink, Alice Jaspers, Gerrit and Dien Cramer, Larry & Lena Breukelman, all of *Thunder Bay ON,* Fritz & Sylvia Breukelman, *Smithville ON,* Ben & Ann Breukelman, *Aurora ON,* Hans & Tini Bonthuis, *Grimsby ON*

A memorial service was held in First Christian Reformed Church of Thunder Bay on Thursday, July 31, 2003 with Rev. Barry Beukema of the United Reformed Church of Thunder Bay officiating.

Correspondence address: Mr. Egbert Breukelman, RR#3, Thunder Bay ON P7C 4V2

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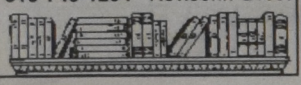

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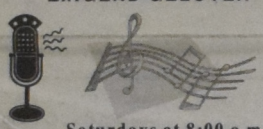

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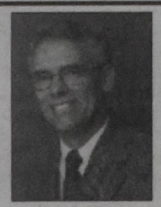

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– Psalm 90:1

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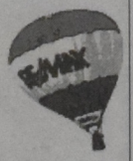

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THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

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BRITISH COLUMBIA

Burns Lake – CFLD	9:15 am	1400
Osoyoos – CJOR	8:00 am	1490
Penticton - CKOR	8:00 am	800
Port Alberni – CJAV	7:00 pm	1240
Prince George – CIRX	7:00 am	94.3
Princeton – CHOR	8:00 am	1400
Smithers – CFBV	9:15 am	1230
Summerland – CHOR	8:00 am	1450
Vernon – CJIB	9:30 pm	940

ALBERTA

Brooks – CIBQ	8:30 am	1340
Ft. McMurray – CJOK	8:30 am	1230
High River – CHRB	6:30 pm	1140
Edmonton – CJCA	6:00 pm	930
Westlock – CFOK	7:30 am	1370

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan – CJSL	8:00 am	1280
Weyburn – CFSL	8:00 am	1190

MANITOBA

Altona – CFAM	9:30 am	950
Steinbach – CHSM	9:30 am	1250
Winnipeg – CKJS	9:00 am	810

ONTARIO

Atikokan – CFAK	9:30 am	1240
Chatham – CFCO	6:30 am	630
Fort Frances - FM	7:30 am	93
Guelph – CJOY	8:30 am	1460
Hamilton – CHAM	7:30 am	820
Kapuskasing – CKAP	7:00 am	580
London – CKSL	7:00 am	1410
Oshawa – CKDO	8:00 am	1350
Owen Sound – CFOS	7:00 am	560
Pembroke – CHVR	10:00 am	96.7
Sarnia – CHOK	7:30 am	1070
Stratford – CJCS	8:45 am	1240
Windsor – CKLW	7:30 am	800
Wingham – CKNX	10:30 am	920

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John – CHSJ	9:00 am	94.1

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown – CFCY	7:00 am	630

NOVA SCOTIA

Bridgewater – CKBW	7:30 am	1000
Digby – CKDY	6:00 am	1420
Halifax – CFDR	8:30 am	780
Liverpool – CKBW	7:30 am	94.5
Kentville – CKEN	8:30 am	1490
Middleton – CKAD	8:30 am	1350
New Glasgow – CKEC	7:30 am	1320
Shelburne – CKBW	7:30 am	93.1
Sydney – CJCB	7:00 am	1270
Weymouth – CKDY	8:30 am	103.1
Windsor – CFAB	8:30 am	1450

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Rocky Mtn. House AB – CHBW 8:30 am Sunday 94.5 FM
Prince Rupert BC – CJRN 10 am Saturday 100.7 FM

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Burlington ON L7R 3Y8 ***Web:*** *www.backtogod.net/*

Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion

Sep 13 Back to God Hour benefit concert at St. George Anglican Church, 99 Woolwich St., **Guelph**, Ont. 7:30 p.m. MATTANIAH Chr. Male Choir. Info: 519-836-6229. See ad for more details.

Sep 17 Bethesda Home will host their Annual Charity **Golf** Tournament at Rockway Glen in **St. Catharines** Includes lunch, dinner, 18 holes of golf, cart, prizes. Info: 905-684-6918 ext. 231 or 242

Oct 10-14 The **Transcona** CRC (Winnipeg, Manitoba) will be celebrating its **50th Anniversary** with praise, thanksgiving & fellowship. For info call: Bev Steendam at 204-853-2150 or jsteenda@mts.net

Oct 11,12 First CRC, **Guelph**, Ont. 50th anniversary. Celebrations include childrens programs, Social, Banquet. See September issue for more details or e-mail:crc-guelph@sentex.net

Oct 18 **Netherlands Bazaar**, **Thornhill** Community Centre, 7755 Bayview Avenue, Thornhill. Market Place: Crafts, etc. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Auction 7 p.m. - 10 p.m. Dutch food delicacies 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. Admission free. For information, call 905-477-1243

Nov. 8 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. Centennial Road Standard Church, Centennial Road, North of **Brockville**. Free will offering. (613)923-2487

Nov 22 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. First Christian Reformed Church, 33 Shirley Ave., **Barrie**. Free will offering. (519)637-4357

Nov 29 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. Providence Presbyterian Church, 447 Second St., **Strathroy**. Free will offering. (519)637-4357

Dec 5, 6,7 **Bethel** CRC **of Lacombe, Alberta**, 50th anniversary - weekend of praise, thanksgiving and fellowship All former and present members and friends are invited. For info, call: Eleanor Wildeboer at 403-782-2602 or e-mail wilelwildeboer@aol.com . (See ad Mar 17 issue)

Dec 14 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m Knox Presbyterian Church, 55 Hincks St., **St. Thomas.** Free wil offering for Christmas Care & Salvation Army (519) 637-4357

Jan 17 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m Wallaceburg Christian Reformed Church, 150 Bruinsma Ave., Wallaceburg. Free will offering for the Canadian Bible Society. (519)637-4357

April 10 **Annual Festival of Praise** by the **Christian Male Chorus** Association of South Western Ontario. 7:30 p.m. Centennial Hall, 550 Wellington St. **London**. Five choirs with over 200 men participating. Ticket: $13 (519)451-5484 or email: jettrickk@sympatico.ca For information: (519)637-4357.

May 2 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m Knox Presbyterian Church 55 Hincks St., **St. Thomas.** Free will offtering for Canadian Bible Society. (519)637-4357

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- Education Committee and Council members
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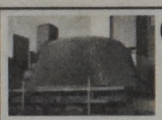

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MATTANIAH
Christian Male Choir
Director:
Herman DerHollander
Organ:
Andre Knevel
Piano:
Joyce Postmus

For information:
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by
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Nov. 22 - 7:30 p.m. First Christian Reformed Church
33 Shirley Av., **Barrie**
Nov. 29 - 7:30 p.m. Providence United Reformed Church
447 Second St., **Strathroy**
Dec. 14 - 7:30 p.m. Knox Presbyterian Church (Christmas)
55 Hincks St., **St. Thomas**
Jan. 17 - 7:30 p.m. Wallaceburg Christian Reformed Church
150 Bruinsma Av., **Wallaceburg**
May 2 - 7:30 p.m. Knox Presbyterian Church
55 Hincks St., **St. Thomas**

All free will offerings - For information **519-637-4357**

Promise Keepers in prison

COLUMBUS, Ohio (EP) — Clean-cut, committed, "men of integrity," and "men transformed worldwide" – Promise Keepers' image seems pretty far removed from that of most convicted criminals. But come Aug. 12, the international ministry will present a major conference behind bars, challenging prison inmates to "Redeem the Time."

Marion Correctional Institution in Marion, Ohio, invited Promise Keepers in for a conference with a plan to have other prisons join the event via live web casts. Already hundreds of inmates over the past two years have taken part in PK conferences via the web casts. But none like the one planned for the 1,800-man medium security prison.

Some 250 Marion inmates attend the facility's monthly rallies through Promise Keepers. About four times that many are expected to attend the conference with another dozen or more prisons in 10 states signing up for theWeb cast.

"We've received calls and e-mails from chaplains in Canada, Australia, Great Britain and across the U.S. who are interested in getting the prisons they serve to tune into the free Web cast," said Ted Padwe, technical director for Promise Keepers. "The Canadian chaplain alone represents 100 federal prisons."

"We want to implement innovative programs that offer hope and help men to return to society in better shape than when we got them," said Marion warden Christine Money. "Many of our programs are faith-based; God is welcome at Marion."

"Not only is there a biblical imperative to visit the imprisoned," said Harold Velasquez, vice president of creative services for Promise Keepers. "But, it makes good sense to implement faith-based programs aimed at true transformation to help prisoners become better citizens for when they return to society."

The theme for Promise Keepers this season is: "The Challenge: A Call To Action." Speakers encourage and challenge attendees to biblical commitment, spiritual growth and friendship, and meeting community needs.

"You don't have to be behind bars to live in prison," said PK's US ministry director Ron Williams, who sees hundreds of men attending conferences throughout the country who are struggling with adultery, alcohol, domestic abuse and other manifestations of spiritual bondage. "We want all men to experience true freedom which only comes through a relationship with Jesus Christ."

Founded by Coach Bill McCartney and Dave Wardell in 1990, Promise Keepers has directly reached more than five million men in 12 years of conference outreach. This season, 18 conferences are planned through October, including an Aug. 8-9 event at Nationwide Arena. Promise Keepers is a member of Operation Starting Line, a collaboration of more than 20 ministries with the goal of offering a faith-based program to every prisoner in America.

World Alliance of Reformed Churches addresses politics in Indonesia and Madagascar

By Laurie Spurr

Torre Pellice, Italy (ENI) — The executive committee of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches meeting in Torre Pellice has urged the president of Indonesia to cease military operations in Aceh and to restart negotiations with the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), which has been fighting for independence for the western province.

In a letter to Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri, the WARC executive committee said it "strongly urges that the military operations of the Indonesian military forces cease immediately."

Megawati's government imposed martial law in Aceh in May and started military operations against the GAM separatists, after peace negotiations between the government and the rebels broke down.

More than 10,000 people – many of them civilians – have died in the battle for independence launched more than 25 years ago in the province of Aceh on the island of Sumatra.

WARC has 27 member denominations in Indonesia, including a church in North Sumatra. The Reformed alliance was urged to respond to the crisis by leaders of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia, the letter to Megawati stated.

The population of Indonesia, a southeastern Asian archipelago, located between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, is 88 per cent Muslim and 8 per cent Christian. The rest of the people are Hindus, Buddhists and of other religions.

The WARC executive also decided to send a team of church leaders to Madagascar, where unrest over presidential elections threatens to divide churches along political lines. The loyalty of Christians remains divided between the current ruler of the country and the man whom he ousted last year after a disputed poll. Political forces are also trying to divide the country along ethnic lines.

The National Council of Christian Churches in Madagascar is considered a political pressure group in the Indian ocean island nation, located off the east coast of Mozambique. Madagascar's population is about 40 per cent Christian and 7 per cent Muslim, with about 52 per cent of the population holding beliefs of people indigenous to the island.

Cyclists' church offers German bike riders spiritual breaks

Frauke Brauns

Bielefeld, Germany (ENI) — Cyclists peddling along the path next to the River Elbe that leads from Hamburg to Prague are now able to stop for both spiritual and physical sustenance at a church for bicycle riders.

The Protestant church in the village of Wessnig near Torgau in eastern Germany is open for cyclists seeking spiritual reflection and calm, and its churchyard has been turned into a recreation area complete with tables, benches and a barbecue area.

"Our two hundred year-old church will be a place to relax and to rest for cyclists traveling the nearby cycling path along the river Elbe," said Tobias Krueger, pastor of the church and initiator of the project.

The project gained its inspiration from motorway churches that exist at some German autobahn service areas offering motorists a spiritual break as well as a chance to replenish on the food and drink on sale in cafes.

The cyclists' church, which offers riders snacks and soft drinks, was inaugurated at a service on July 27, carried live on radio. There will be regular times for prayer and meditation and visitors who request it will also be offered pastoral care.

There are already chapels for cyclists in Reinhardsbrunn in the Thuringian forest and in Vogelsberg and further cyclists' churches are planned in Obernzell near Passau in Bavaria and in Gartow in Lower Saxony, in the northern part of the country.

The church in Wessnig is planning a number of exhibitions including one of gravestones to show the work of stonemasons as well as how they testify to the Christian message. It also plans to put up a greenhouse containing plants mentioned in the Bible.

Inside the church there will be a permanent display of the East German church program "mobile without a car," which was launched in the early 1980s to encourage people to use bicycles rather than cars.

"We want to give people something to think about while they are here," Krueger noted.

The church will be open to visitors all day, but Krueger said there would be no need to post guards. "Only 100 people live here," he said. "We have to trust the visitors."

News Digest

Terrorists demand compensation

The Mau Mau terrorists who brutally murdered hundreds of Kenyans in their fight against British colonialism are now claiming compensation from Britain. Many claim they were subject to beatings and torture in British prison camps. About 70 whites were killed in the conflict and over a thousand Kenyans were hanged as terrorists.

The Provost of Nairobi's Anglican All Saint's Cathedral, said compensation would help promote reconciliation between Britain and the fighters and their families.

But the Anglican Archbishop said that while he "guardedly" supported the demand, some Mau Mau veterans could be expecting too much, "forgetting that freedom was the goal and was attained".

Mother Theresa film dropped

A film depicting the life of Mother Theresa has been dropped from a documentary film festival due to protests. The film festival marks the famous nun's beatification, a rite that often precedes sainthood. Entitled *Hell's Angel*, the documentary shows Mother Teresa mingling with Haitian dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier and reveals that she accepted funds from a swindler in the United States.

The order's spokesperson said: "Mother never tried to find out how those who came forward to help her earned their money. Whoever gave her money, she accepted it gladly."

Modern piracy

Piracy on the high seas isn't just matter for swashbuckling movies set in the days of sailing ships. In the first six months of this year, acts of piracy soared worldwide, reaching an all-time high and resulting in the deaths of 16 sailors. Most of the attacks occurred off Indonesia and the Philippines in the South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca.

Today's pirates no longer brandish swords but operate with a sophistication that indicates the presence of organized crime. According to the National Post, they come armed with machine guns, rocket launchers, satellite phones and global positioning systems.

City birds

According to the Dutch, city birds often sing higher-pitched songs than their country counterparts to make their mating calls heard over the noise of Dutch traffic.

According to the magazine Nature, scientists have found great tits adjust their songs as they interact with neighbors in their breeding territory.

The study does not say whether Dutchmen have learned anything from the great tits.